April, 2017

Boston’s Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model: Research and Evaluation

Melissa Pearrow, Jill Snyder, Boston Public Schools
Amy Kaye, Boston Children’s Hospital

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/melissa_pearrow/4/
Advocacy

Rights Without Labels: Thirty Years Later
By Adam Lockwood & Alan Coulter

In 1986, NASP’s position paper, Rights Without Labels, was published. This document was radical because it acknowledged that serious problems existed in the educational classification system and proposed the necessity of serving students with special needs within the general education setting without labeling them (NASP, 1986). Anniversaries are a cause for reflection and often celebration or mourning. As we conclude this 30th anniversary of Rights Without Labels and look back on our progress toward these goals, do we break out our party hats or our black veils?

REVOLUTION? Why did the NASP Delegate Assembly suggest such a radical shift in practice? The reason for the call for change was the belief that the system for labeling students with disabilities had major flaws that included: (a) stigmatization of students who received labels, (b) classification unreliability, (c) classifications that lacked instructional relevance, (d) exclusion of classified students from the general education setting, and (e) difficulties removing a label once it had been given (NASP, 1986). Due to these flaws, NASP proposed a new paradigm in which students would not be labeled, but instead all students would receive the services they need through prereferral screening and interventions conducted by general education personnel. The delegation proposed that this screening be conducted using curriculum based assessments and that special education services and resources be provided within the general education setting (NASP, 1986).

HISTORY While Rights Without Labels called for drastic changes in education policy and practice, the key points of the paper were long in the making. It seems that almost since NASP’s inception, members had been raising concerns...
One Small Step, One Big Leap = Faith!

BY MELISSA REEVES

Keep the faith. As I sit at the computer, I am becoming more and more frustrated with writer’s block; my thoughts are all over the place, nothing seems to connect. Earlier today, I helped a family member struggling with the unexpected death of my 44-year-old cousin that occurred the week before Christmas. She has freshman high school twins, the same age as my daughter, so this particularly hit home. As I type these words, TV programming was just interrupted with the news of another mass shooting at an airport. Within the past few days a video was posted on social media of a live beating of a man with disabilities, and certain federal legislation runs the risk of being repealed (my dad has leukemia, and he needs “Obama Care”). And for us in education, who knows what will happen with ESSA regulations? Why are the thoughts not connecting? Why am I feeling so disconnected? I realize that the answer is relatively simple. It’s because I am feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and beginning to question what is happening to our world. What has happened to humanity? Is there any hope for our future? And I can only guess that some of you are feeling overwhelmed too. With the shortage of school psychologists, I know many of you are stretched thin and doing the work of many. As I type these words, I am realizing how many this applies to current events negatively impacting our sense of safety and security.

So, where do we begin when life events seem so overwhelming and negative? We have to keep focused on faith. If we have faith, we then have hope. We have incredible skills and knowledge to help ourselves and each other foster faith. Mindfulness, positive psychology, conflict resolution, and creating caring communities are just a few of the areas in which we can draw on our expertise to help ourselves and each other get through challenging times. In addition, we have three resolutions to help keep the faith for the rest of this year.

Take more time to truly listen, hear, and understand. In moments of anxiety and pain, hurt and loss, I often hear phrases like: “Just get over it!” or “You can’t change it, so just move on.” Personally, I find these phrases incredibly insulting because they shut down emotion and dialogue. It also sends a message that feelings and perspectives don’t matter. While there are outcomes that often cannot be changed, I can help foster moving forward by activating social supports and being open to understanding and acknowledging the challenging situation.

Even in moments of difficulty and disagreement, find common ground and work toward peaceful solutions. In the words of Antonin Scalia (former Supreme Court Justice), it is important to attack ideas, not people (he spoke of knowing many good people who have bad ideas). In today’s world of constant exposure to media, the focus tends to be on winning and losing, with individuals being attacked instead of ideas. I also have to be more cognizant that just because someone likes an idea, it doesn’t always mean they like the person behind the idea (and vice versa). Overgeneralization leads to more dissention. I can help set the tone for disagreeing respectfully, utilizing empathetic listening, and finding a common solution.

Remember the small steps we take are helping to create a stronger society in the future. I am encouraged by the number of youth who are appalled and questioning the negative actions often get the attention, I can’t lose perspective of the many positive actions being demonstrated every day by caring people. Find more time to relax. Ok, this is much easier said than done, but I am trying! It is also healthy to disconnect from the negativity to maintain balance and perspective.

So, one small step (or for some of us, one big leap), in the words of George Michael, is that we “gotta have faith!”

Melissa Reeves is the president of the National Association of School Psychologists.

Editor’s Note

It’s Time to Pay Attention

About midway through my career, I became acutely aware of an important reality: that as helpful as I was as a clinician working with my individual students and families, I could help a far greater number of students succeed if I added more systemic advocacy to my repertoire of interventions. From that point on, I have done things like serve on district and state committees to advocate for better services, written letters to legislators, and served in NASP leadership. While these activities were often easy to fit into my work life, they assumed more of my time and attention as the years went by. Interesting enough, as I look back, it is those more systemic advocacy interventions that I now think were the most important interventions that I have made on behalf of children.

I am proud to say that many NASP members work on public policy and social justice advocacy—each in their own way. NASP as an association exerts a lot of its effort on behalf of public policy advocacy, and that is one of the reasons that I gladly pay my dues every year. Of course, the election of a new president and Congress is always a time when new ideas are debated and new policies are put into effect. In my memory, however, more issues critical to the welfare of our students and their families are being discussed in more radical ways than ever before. And all of this is happening in the midst of an information overload fueled by political partisanship, the Internet, social media, and “breaking news” every 10 minutes on television. It gets confusing.

Well, it’s time to pay attention.

I want to suggest that you read some of the advocacy pieces in this issue to learn about NASP’s public policy and legislative platform (p. 24 & 26); what can be done to reduce the school psychology shortages (p. 16); and, for a bit of NASP’s history of advocacy, the anniversary of the Rights Without Labels document (p. 1). You can find more resources and information on NASP’s public policy efforts under the Research & Policy heading on the NASP website.

The journalist Thomas Friedman says that, in the face of what seems like everything is changing so fast at the same time, “you can dance in a hurricane.” I like this metaphor and have resolved to stay in the eye of the storm and observe the swirl about me while remaining calm and hopeful. I will be aware of the swirl, but not let my energy be sapped by it. I will, however, pay attention when I see something that is substantial and that has real impact on the issues that are important to me and to my students. I will pay attention and I will act. And I won’t get tossed about by the distractions.

Happy spring, everyone! Pay attention.

—John E. Desrochers
Communiqué

© 2017, National Association of School Psychologists

Volume 45, Number 6

President’s Message
One Small Step. One Big Leap = Faith!
By Melissa Reeves

Editor’s Note
It’s Time to Pay Attention
By John E. Desbochers

NASP Elections
Lisa Kelly-Vance and Wendy Price to Lead NASP
By Charles Deubree

Professional Practice
Addressing Motivational Issues in School-Based Consultation
By Wesley A. Sims, Daniel R. Cohen, & Keith Herman

Advocacy
Rights Without Labels: Thirty Years Later
By Adam Lockwood & Alan Coulter

Viewpoint
The Fine Line Between Cultural Competence and Bias
By Adam Gayerroud, Dorna Rahimi, & Souja Saqai

Research-Based Practice
Boston’s Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model: Research and Evaluation
By Melissa M. Pearrow, Jill Snyder, & Amy Kaye

Professional Practice
How to Reconcile Requests for Special Education Evaluations With RTI
By Daniel A. Osher

Professional Practice
A Resource Guide to Remediating the School Psychology Shortages Crisis
By Joel O. Bocanegra, Sally L. Grapen, Leah M. Nellis, & Eric Rosen

Communication Matters
Transforming the Role of School Psychology: A State-Level Effort
By Barry Barbarash

Transitions
Preparing in the Trenches: How to Market Yourself for a Job in Academia
By Daniel F. McCleary

NASP Policy Platform

Advocacy
NASP Releases 2017 Policy and Legislative Platform
By Kelly Vaillancourt Spyroch

Early Career Spotlight
Work–Life Balance
Q&A With Angela Dobbins

Welcoming and Safe Schools
Professional Development Tools on Trans Youth Available
By Mary Beth Klotz

NASP News
North Carolina School Psychologist to Join NASP
By Julie M. Koerner

NASP Professional Practice
Welcoming and Safe Schools
By Wes McCaroll

COMMUNIQUÉ

NASP’s Strategic Partnership With the Joint Committee on Standards in Educational Evaluation
By Julie Q. Morrison

Just a Click Away
Schools Becoming Targets of Ransomware
By Dan Florell

BOOK REVIEWS

The thought of a school psychologist losing access to her reports, assessment data, and student databases is sobering. Take steps to minimize the likelihood of becoming a victim of ransomware.

NASP’s Strategic Partnership With the Joint Committee on Standards in Educational Evaluation
By Julie Q. Morrison

Practical Handbook of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Building Academic and Behavioral Success in School
Reviewed by Karanex Rose

Psychoeducational Assessment and Intervention for Ethnic Minority Children
Reviewed by Garry Wicker

NASP provides publications for and on behalf of the membership to advance the profession of school psychology and to enhance the welfare of children and families. NASP therefore will accept advertising based upon legal, social, professional and ethical considerations. Promotion of products, events or services must be directly relevant to school psychology practice and training; must be consistent with the ethical principles and practice guidelines of the Association; and must be consistent in tone, content and appearance with the Association’s goals and relevant publications. The Association reserves the right to reject any advertising that is not in keeping with this policy or which is submitted for the purpose of airing either side of controversial professional or social issues, including promotion of candidates for election. Information regarding advertising is available online at: www.nasponline.org/advertising

EDITORIAL DEADLINES, Volume 45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue #</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>July 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>August 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>December 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>January 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>January/February</td>
<td>February 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>March 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>April 10, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response to Intervention and SLD Identification

By Perry A. Zirkel

or this 11th article in the series reviewing recent court decisions concerning appropriate school psychology practice from both professional and legal perspectives, the focus is on response to intervention (RTI) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The 2004 amendments of the IDEA authorized the use of RTI for identification of one of the classifications (specific learning disability; SLD), specifying that for this purpose, states may no longer require severe discrepancy and must permit school districts to use “a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention” (§ 1414[b][6]). More specifically, the 2006 regulations of the IDEA delegated the choice among (a) RTI as mandatory or permissive, (b) the traditional severe discrepancy approach as permissive or prohibited, and (c) “other alternative research-based procedures” as mandatory or permissive (§ 300.307[a]). During the subsequent period, a growing minority of approximately 15–20 states have chosen to require RTI for SLD identification, with the remaining states delegating the choice to local school districts. However, the state laws often leave a lot of implementation issues unresolved.

By Perry A. Zirkel

THE CASE

In 2010–2011, K.M. was a kindergartner in the public schools of Greenwich, a wealthy community in Connecticut, which is one of the mandatory RTI jurisdictions. Toward the end of the year, her parents became concerned about her ability to “follow multistep instructions,” particularly in light of a family history of learning disabilities. During the summer before grade 1, they expressed their concern via the first-grade teacher’s “getting to know you” form.

In the following October, they sent an e-mail to the first-grade teacher requesting an in-person meeting, because they noticed that their daughter was having “enormous” difficulties in reading simple books. At the meeting, based on their insistence and emphasis on family history, the teacher agreed to refer K.M. to the school’s RTI student assistance team (SAT).

In November, the SAT team developed an “intervention plan” for K.M. The twin objectives were (a) to increase her recognition and use of sight words, and (b) to increase one level in the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) Benchmark Assessment System, which consists of a series of books designed to measure, on successive difficulty levels from A to Z, a student’s ability to read fiction and nonfiction. The plan included meeting with the school’s reading specialist for her grade, “but the team was “intervening early in light of [your] concerns” and they would receive follow-up reports. The reading specialist promptly followed up, informing the parents that she had selected the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) for the thrice-weekly supplemental reading sessions. The reading specialist found the referral for her services to be unusual, because K.M. was on grade level, whereas her students were typically two or more levels below. Her periodic reports to K.M.’s parents informed them of appropriately positive progress.

Nevertheless, at the end of December, the parents hired a private reading tutor to meet twice weekly with K.M. The tutor was from Windward School, a private school for students with language-based learning disabilities that is located in nearby White Plains, NY. They informed the school of their continuing concern and the tutor.

At the end of January, the principal sent them a progress report, stating that K.M. “has shown inconsistency in her ability to recognize sight words and high frequency words” and, as a result, “we will increase the amount of time she practices these words in school ... to three opportunities each day.” The parents sent him a reply that “the updated plan is identical to the original plan [that] has not been a successful path for [K.M.]”

In March, based on their perception that K.M. was not making sufficient progress, the parents hired Dr. G., a private psychologist, to conduct an independent educational evaluation (IEE). Dr. G. conducted six testing sessions in April and May, although she did not conduct an in-school observation of K.M. or meet with the teacher, the school psychologist, or the reading specialist. By early June, Dr. G. issued a 20-page report that included diagnoses of “specific reading disorder, ADHD-combined type, and generalized anxiety.” For example, she reported that “despite strong evenly developed cognitive functioning ... [and] intensive intervention at school and tutoring at home, [K.M.’s] reading skills fall well below the expected level for her age.”

On June 13, after receiving Dr. G’s report, the parents sent to the principal a formal request for an evaluation for special education eligibility. Their request identified three specific areas of concern: “(a) reading struggles; (b) anxiety and self-confidence issues; and (c) attention and focus issues.”

On June 19, the multidisciplinary team, including the principal, first-grade teacher, reading specialist, school psychologist, Dr. G., the parents, and their attorney met to consider the referral. Their materials included Dr. G.’s report, the F&P results (reported as progressing from level B to level H at a time when I, J, and K was the benchmark), the sight word documentation (reported at 100% of 110 first-grade sight words at a time when 88 was the benchmark), and report cards. Each participant had an opportunity for input. For example, the parents reported that K.M. was very anxious at home and very stressed about reading, and the school psychologist reported strong social skills and no signs of ADHD or anxiety at school. After the meeting, the school informed the parents of the decision to decline to conduct an evaluation. They explained that K.M. was responding to the intervention with consistent measurable progress, thus inferably suggesting the lack of a reason to suspect eligibility. The notice included a copy of the procedural safeguards form and a recommendation for K.M. to participate in the school’s summer program.

Soon thereafter, the parents filed an application for admission of K.M. to Windward School. In late June, after its customary initial testing, which found K.M. to be below grade level in reading rate, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension, Windward accepted her for admission for the 2012–2013 school year in its second grade. The tuition is approximately $50K per year. On July 12, the parents signed the enrollment contract and filed for a due process hearing, asserting child find and eligibility violations and seeking compensatory and/or reimbursement relief.

In September, in preparation for the hearing, the parents retained a reading specialist, who performed a 1-hour curriculum-based assessment in reading and who reviewed the IEE and some of K.M.’s school records. Her two-page report concluded that K.M. was in the 10th percentile for first-grade readers.

On January 13, 2013, after six hearing sessions from early October to early December, the hearing officer issued her decision, ruling that K.M. was eligible as SLD and was entitled to tuition reimbursement. The district subsequently filed an appeal with the federal district court in Connecticut.

THE QUESTIONS: PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Based on the information recounted above, three members of the profession—Dr. Michael Paff, school psychologist at Highland (NY) High School; Hannah Greeley, doctoral student at Baylor University; and Dr. Leesa Huang, professor at California State University Chico—provided their responses to the following series of questions. Immediately after their answers for each subpart of the first question is a summary of the relevant ruling in the court’s decision for this case (Greenwich Board of Education v. G.M., 2016). The “courts” answer for the questions after the first one, due to the extended scope of their “what if” nature, extends to other case law.

Question 1. What do you think was the court’s ruling specifically with regard to:
(a) the parents’ child find claim (i.e., that the district had reason to suspect SLD eligibility, thus requiring a comprehensive evaluation under the IDEA)?

Paff: The court probably concluded that the district did not meet their child find obligations. Although the district personnel initially took note of the parents’ concerns and acted promptly, it looks like they did not revise the intervention plan appropriately in late January, when the school reported that K.M. was “inconsistent in her ability to recognize sight words.” Even though their own data from the F&P Benchmark Assessment showed that K.M. had been below grade level since January, the school representatives did not give due consideration to the parents’ IEE upon receiving it in late June. I also question the quality of the data the district used as well as the appropriateness of the intervention. Lacking many of the hallmarks of traditional curriculum-based measurements, the F&P
The SRS-2 allows you to accurately identify social impairment associated with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and quantifies its severity. Aligned with the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for ASD, this comprehensive assessment provides both a Social Communication Index and Restricted/Repetitive Behaviors Index.

Experience the benefits of fast and secure SRS-2 administration on the new WPS Online Evaluation System.

With the SRS-2 online, you can:
- Quickly deliver electronic forms to parents and teachers
- Check the status of an administration anytime, anywhere
- Save money—online forms are consumed only when scored
- Easily print answer sheets for respondents without internet access
- Score forms instantly with the click of a button
- Conveniently view scores from multiple forms in a Progress Monitoring report

Contact a WPS Assessment Consultant at consult@wpspublish.com to schedule a demonstration of the SRS-2 online for your organization.
Benchmark Assessment System has not been established to be a reliable and valid diagnostic tool or progress monitoring system. Similarly, LLI lacks independent support as being an effective reading intervention for struggling readers.

Greeley: The court likely ruled in favor of the district on the child find claim. Child find applies when a child may be slipping through the cracks and the school has not specifically helped and tested them. Here, instead, it appears that the school provided RTI support with progress monitoring that showed K.M. to be on track.

Huang: The court most likely ruled in favor of the parents because they provided ample evidence that K.M. could have a disability. More specifically, the triggering evidence consisted of (a) the family history, (b) the IEE report, and (c) K.M.’s failure to meet the grade level reading benchmark at the middle and end of the year reporting times.

Court: In the Greenwich Board of Education (2016) case, the court’s child find ruling was in favor of the parent based on the conclusion that the district had reasonable suspicion of K.M.’s eligibility by the time of the IEE. The private psychologist’s unrebuted conclusion that K.M. had failed to meet the IDEA standard for RTI of “sufficient progress” was the culminating addition to the FEP drop below grade level performance in reading during the preceding months of RTI. Finally, the court concluded that the child find violation was not harmless because it significantly impeded the parents’ opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

(b) the parents’ eligibility claim (i.e., that, regardless of the child find claim, K.M. qualified as SLD and, as a result, needed special education)?

Paff: This ruling was also likely in the parents’ favor. By the time the district reviewed the IEE, even its own questionable data from the FEP showed the student was below the expected benchmark and had been for some time. That, combined with the data presented in the IEE, would seem to support a classification of SLD. The school psychologist’s input that the student did not show signs of ADHD or anxiety in school superseded the IEE due to its lack of classroom observations; however, that finding does not rule out an SLD classification.

Greeley: The court would likely rule against the parents on their eligibility claim. They appeared to be adamant in obtaining special education status for K.M. regardless of what the school officials suggested or did. The person they hired to assess their child conducted an incomplete assessment, lacking the significant data of how the child was performing in the school setting.

Huang: The court most likely ruled in favor of the parents. The primary reason was that K.M. started the year on grade level in reading but, despite targeted interventions, she was unable to meet the grade level benchmark at the end of the year. The intervention process should be focused on closing the achievement gap, not merely about documenting whether “measurable progress” occurred.

Court: This ruling was also in favor of the parents. K.M.’s experience with RTI contributed to this ruling in two ways, which corresponded to the two basic prongs of IDEA eligibility. First, her lack of sufficient progress in the RTI reading activities supported the hearing officer’s conclusion that she qualified for the SLD classification. Second, her participation showed that she needed specialized instruction.

(c) the parents’ tuition reimbursement claim (i.e., that the district did not provide FAPE and that the Windward School was individually tailored to provide her with educational benefit)?

Paff: In all probability, the court ruled in favor of the parents on their tuition reimbursement claim. The district’s intervention was inappropriate both in terms of (a) using a reading program that was not scientifically research based, (b) failing to make meaningful changes to the intervention plan when it became clear that the student was not responding sufficiently, and (c) not providing the child with FAPE who should have found her eligible for special education.

Greeley: The court likely sided with the parents for tuition reimbursement because they sincerely and correctly believed that the Windward School would be effective for K.M.

Huang: The court likely ruled in favor of the parents. The district failed to provide FAPE in light of the child find and eligibility violations. The reports from the IEE, the initial testing from Windward, and the information from the parents’ reading specialist confirmed that K.M. was not progressing as quickly as expected as a result of the district’s RTI process.

Court: Here too the court’s ruling was in the parents’ favor. Given the denial of FAPE based on the court’s ruling regarding parental participation and eligibility, the two remaining criteria were the appropriateness of the private placement and the equities, or reasonableness of the parties’ conduct. Pointing out the relatively relaxed standard for unilateral placements in tuition reimbursement cases, the court rather easily found that Windward was appropriate for this purpose. More specifically, the court iterated the standard as follows: “To be reimbursable, the program need not be individually crafted for K.M. herself, but rather should be specially designed to meet K.M.’s needs” (p. 73). As for the equities, the court found the record quite clear that the parents had consistently exerted good faith efforts to resolve K.M.’s reading problem within the district before resorting to the Windward placement.

Question 2. Beyond the RTI context, do you think that courts more generally in recent years have been favorable to parents’ claims of child find and SLD eligibility? Explain your yes or no answer to each part of the question below.

(a) child find:

Paff: Yes, I think courts have been favorable to parents’ child find claims. Some districts have used RTI as permission to ignore parents’ requests for special education evaluation. While a district may be justified in refusing to evaluate upon parents’ request, the burden is on the district to prove that sufficient data demonstrates that the student is making appropriate progress and likely would not meet eligibility criteria. Districts also too easily forget to issue notice that the IDEA requires in such situations.

Greeley: I too think that courts tend to rule favorably to parents’ child find claims because the judicial standard is what is best for that child, which aligns with what the parents seek in terms of evaluation and education.

Huang: Outside of the RTI context, I think that courts have been favorable to districts with regard to child find. In light of this long-standing IDEA requirement, many districts have school-based systems and procedures in place to determine when there are reasonable grounds to suspect disability classification and special education need.

Court: Contrary to the prevailing view in the special education literature, the outcomes of court rulings with regard to the two standards of child find—reasonable suspicion (of eligibility sufficient to warrant an evaluation) and reasonable period (to start the evaluation)—have been strongly skewed in favor of districts (Zirkel, 2014b). Similarly, for reasonable suspicion, which is the primary focus of the litigation, most of the rulings are based on a variety of evidence rather than any particular red flag (Zirkel, 2010).

(b) SLD eligibility:

Paff: I really don’t know. Very often, parents do not understand how RTI works. Thus, in states that require RTI for SLD eligibility and in districts that opt to use RTI for this purpose in the remaining, permissive states, parents may make an evaluation request without realizing that their child’s progress disproves the need for special education.

Greeley: I don’t know, especially because SLD is more difficult to diagnose than other disability classifications.

Huang: Similar to child find, I would think that courts have been favorable to districts regarding eligibility. Given that there is a portion of the typical eligibility form that allows for team justification, I think schools tend to identify and provide services as an acceptable solution to help struggling students.

Courts: Most of the case law in recent years, particularly at the court level, continues to be based on either severe discrepancy (for eligibility prong 1) or the need for special education (eligibility prong 2), and the outcomes trend similarly continues to be in favor of districts (e.g., Zirkel, 2010a).

Question 3. Conversely, within the RTI context, do you think that the case law in the past 2 years has been frequent and parent favorable? And has it provided useful guidance for the practical questions of RTI implementation, such as the appropriate time periods, progress measures for tiers, and the applicable rigor for fidelity?

Paff: I don’t know because RTI mostly comes into play at the elementary level, and my role shifted to the high school level in recent years. My impression is that the time periods, progress measures, and treatment fidelity for the various tiers remain gray areas in practice, at least in the state in which I currently work.

Greeley: I think case law in the past 2 years regarding RTI tends to favor the school districts because they are the ones implementing the intervention plans. From what I have learned and heard, it does not provide useful guidance for creating an effective RTI system; in fact, many schools have a poor RTI system because they don’t necessarily have the proper support. RTI is a good concept when put together properly.

Huang: After the addition of RTI into the IDEA, I believe that the case law should be both more frequent and parent favorable. There seems to be widespread conflict with regard to various implementation issues, such as which high-quality research-based interventions to use, which intervention timelines for progress monitoring and benchmarking are appropriate, and what is the applicable definition of adequate progress. Case law presumably provides useful answers in response to these disputed issues. However, I believe it is important to come to a consensus on effective models of practice instead of providing hard
Advocate for a safe, supportive school environment for LGBTQ+ youth.

Differentiate between biological sex and gender identity.

Learn from the experiences of LGBTQ and intersex students.

Identify and address potential mental health concerns.

Assess suicide risk for sexual minority youth.

Understand the prevalence of bullying and school victimization.

Bring district leaders together to support LGBTQI2-S* youth. You can use this compilation of articles, research, and position papers with administrators, educators, and parents.

*In the above acronym, 2-S refers to Two-Spirit, referencing the Indigenous American culture with regards to gender identity.
and fast rules about using RTI for SLD eligibility.

COURT: The case law specific to RTI is largely limited to hearing officer decisions, and it has provided negligible guidance regarding the specific standards for implementing IEP appropriately. Indeed, the Greenwich Board of Education decision comes the closest to providing useful guidance, but it does not answer any of these implementation issues, and its unpublished trial court level amounts to limited legal weight in jurisdictions beyond Connecticut.

**Question 4.** Finally, returning to K.M.’s case, what, if anything, do you think Greenwich’s school psychologist should have done to improve the district’s position or decrease the legal value of the IEE and the private reading specialist’s report?

Parry: In January 2015, when it became clear that K.M. was responding inconsistently, the school psychologist could have consulted with the intervention team to initiate more meaningful changes to the intervention plan, such as suggesting a scientifically based reading intervention rather than continuing with LLI. Also, the school psychologist could have conducted several formal observations of K.M. in the classroom, at least one of which should have been during reading instruction. The IDEA requires an observation of the student in the learning environment for SLD evaluation anyway, and this step would have enabled the school psychologist to provide an informed opinion about the student’s response to reading instruction, time on task, and any observable signs of anxiety or withdrawal. Such observations would have also provided more data about suspected ADHD. Finally, the school psychologist could also have done a more complete records review and, with parental permission, also consulted with the reading specialist to do a more in-depth survey-level assessment of K.M.’s actual instructional reading level.

Greeley: The school psychologist should have made sure to not only accurately assess the child, but also provide a comprehensive evaluation report, including classroom observation and teacher and home information. The report should give the parents and other members of the multidisciplinary team carefully detailed and comprehensive conclusions to explain why K.M. did not need more services than the school already provided.

Reese: For both private reports, the district school psychologist could have emphasized the significance of failing to (a) conduct an in-school observation of K.M. during reading intervention and (b) collect information from school personnel, such as the teacher, the reading specialist, and the school psychologist. Providing such a counter to a “snapshot” approach would have afforded the district an opportunity to demonstrate K.M.’s progress and growth over time even though she failed to meet the benchmark. Finally, in response to parent request for evaluation, the school psychologist should have advocated for a comprehensive assessment of K.M. Perhaps the RTI data in the context of a complete assessment would support the district’s position instead of allowing the results of the IEE to be the prime source for K.M.’s profile.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Here, our panelists were largely correct in predicting the Greenwich court’s ruling but largely for the “wrong” reasons. Their stated reasons reflect a normative understanding of the school psychologist’s role rather than the principle of legal decisions and the legal requirements. Here, the court’s rationale is limited to the recognition of the difference between legal requirements.

Greeley: The school psychologist should have made sure to not only accurately assess the child, but also provide a comprehensive evaluation report, including classroom observation and teacher and home information. The report should give the parents and other members of the multidisciplinary team carefully detailed and comprehensive conclusions to explain why K.M. did not need more services than the school already provided.

Reese: For both private reports, the district school psychologist could have emphasized the significance of failing to (a) conduct an in-school observation of K.M. during reading intervention and (b) collect information from school personnel, such as the teacher, the reading specialist, and the school psychologist. Providing such a counter to a “snapshot” approach would have afforded the district an opportunity to demonstrate K.M.’s progress and growth over time even though she failed to meet the benchmark. Finally, in response to parent request for evaluation, the school psychologist should have advocated for a comprehensive assessment of K.M. Perhaps the RTI data in the context of a complete assessment would support the district’s position instead of allowing the results of the IEE to be the prime source for K.M.’s profile.

**References**


IDEA regulations, 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.1 et seq. (2013).


Bring school-to-home collaboration into the digital age with The Tough Kid Electronic Home Notes. This research-validated Tier 2 behavior intervention uses the Google platform to send a custom home note via email. The program also allows you to view progress-monitoring charts automatically. This latest addition to The Tough Kid Series contains step-by-step directions for setup and implementation.

Tough Kid Tier 2 Interventions
FREE Pre-recorded Webinar with William Jenson, Ph.D.: pacificnwpublish.com/archives

FREE Pre-recorded Webinars with authors:
• Building a Climate for Coaching
• FIRST STEP Next for challenging young students
• Bullying Solutions
• Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

Tier 2 Interventions
by The Tough Kid authors
from Pacific Northwest Publishing

The Tough Kid
On-Task in a Box
by William Jenson, Ph.D., and Marilyn Sprick

Improve students’ on-task behavior in the classroom and enhance academic achievement.

The Tough Kid On-Task in a Box supports students who are chronically off task and underachieving. Evidence shows that students improved time on task from a baseline average of 32% to 88% after implementing the procedures in On-Task in a Box.

The Tough Kid On-Task in a Box employs research-based strategies, including self-monitoring, self-graphing, and video peer modeling.

The Tough Kid On-Task in a Box can be implemented with individual students, buddies, or a whole class.
Boston’s Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model: Research and Evaluation

By Melissa M. Pearrow, Jill Snyder, & Amy Kaye

Systems to organize academic outcomes data are integrated into schools, and while behavioral data, instruction tools, and systems are emerging, a clear gap remains (Lane, Oakes, & Menzies, 2010). Behavioral health has historically targeted resources at an individual level, and transitioning to a systems perspective of prevention and intervention for behavioral and mental health concerns is a paradigm shift (Doll & Cummings, 2008). This approach is less familiar to teachers and school staff who are not trained in behavioral or mental health.

The foundation of the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model (CBHM), designed by school psychologists in Boston Public Schools (BPS) with community partners, is an interconnected systems framework (Barrett, Eber, & Weist, 2013), which merges a multitiered system of support (MTSS) with school mental health (SMH). The MTSS coordinates structures for the academic and behavioral developmental needs of all students through universal screening, tiered levels of support, established problem-solving processes, and the coordination of both formal and informal resources to inform decision-making at all levels (Davis Bianco, 2010; Glover, Diperna, & Vaughn, 2007; NASP, 2009). SMH recognizes the requirement for access to enhanced mental health services for students with more intensive needs. By merging these evidence-based approaches, the CBHM allowed the school district to address the complex needs of children and youth at risk for, or experiencing, emotional and behavioral challenges.

From its inception, the focus on data has been a critical aspect of CBHM’s development. This article highlights the last 5 years’ growth in building evaluation and data systems that served as a guide to decision-making. In addition, a few of the outcomes will be highlighted. (More information regarding CBHM can be found at Pearrow, Amador, and Denney, 2016).

**AN EARLY FOCUS ON EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES**

When district leaders of BPS began the partnership with Boston Children’s Hospital and University of Massachusetts Boston, they worked diligently to use a goal-directed, data-driven approach to guide services and allocate resources to meet the behavioral health needs of all students. The partnering agencies, whose members formed the Executive Work Group (EWG), identified the need to fully articulate the strategies and outcomes anticipated from this integrated model. With input from multiple key stakeholders, the EWG created a logic model to articulate the activities (e.g., professional development, data management systems) needed to build CBHM, as well as the anticipated outcomes for students, schools, and the district. Logic models are useful tools that essentially provide a roadmap for a program or initiative. They clarify a program’s intended destination, the pathway to that destination, markers to help ensure the program remains on the path (and to provide guidance if not), and the resources needed to reach that destination (McDonald, 2007; Shakman & Rodriquez, 2015). They generally follow a flowchart format that outlines a program’s inputs, outputs, and short, medium, and long-term outcomes (University of Wisconsin Extension, 2008). Using a logic model to articulate a theory of change (“Integrating behavioral health services into schools will create safe and supportive learning environments that optimize academic outcomes for all students”), the EWG described how investing key resources (inputs) into strategically identified activities (outputs) would lead to the goal of improved functioning for all students in the district (see Macklem, 2014, for more information about the logic model). The process of narrowing the anticipated outcomes was laborious, taking at least 4 months of ongoing discussion for consensus among EWG. In retrospect, all partners agreed that the time and energy to clarify the outcomes and outputs was well spent, particularly since the logic model has been instrumental in guiding evaluation strategies and processes. Working through this process required the team to allocate capacity and resources in guiding stakeholders with diverse interests and identified by various community groups. It created a common language about what mattered to all stakeholders across all stages of planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting. In this way, the logic model has been crucial to establishing appropriate research questions and consistently holding ourselves and CBHM accountable as a team for answering those questions.

During the planning phases, the only initial source of data was the publically accessible information related to state-wide achievement and school climate, since evaluation resources were primarily shared by community partners. Each agency was committed to establishing a dedicated resource for collecting data, and what was readily available was related to disability, students with special needs, and compliance on access to data limited evaluation procedures. Thus, as the model expanded, so did the resources to designate school staff to support data collection and analysis. Grant funding from Boston Children’s Hospital enabled the hiring of a BPS school psychologist, which enabled access to internal data such as universal behavioral-health screening data, discipline data (e.g., office discipline referral information, suspensions, and expulsions), attendance, and grades. In addition, this staff member was able to establish partnerships with the district office that manages data and accountability systems. The partnership and access have been critical in developing data systems that can authentically use preexisting data and examine the impact of CBHM on students and schools. More recently, efforts have turned to identifying how school psychologists utilize their time and to fidelity of implementation in order to work toward better understanding differences in school-level outcomes.

In the early stages, the drafting of research and practice extended into the exploration and piloting of universal behavior screening systems (Cook, Volpe, & Livianis, 2010; Henderson & Strain, 2009). Screening data was determined to be critical to monitoring outcomes for students, identifying strategies for effective interventions, and allocating resources and partnerships for enhanced services. The decision to implement a universal behavioral health screener was an important first step in systematically examining the social–emotional needs of students at the district, school, grade/class, and individual level. Moreover, there was a strong commitment from school leaders to address the disproportionality often seen in other data collection systems that primarily identify students with conduct or acting-out behaviors, males, and students of color.

After piloting five separate universal screening tools, the Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System (BIMAS) was selected. The instrument is a brief tool that allows teachers, parents, clinicians, and self-report (for those ages 12–18 years) to screen children ages 5–18 years and was developed by McDougall, Baro, and Meier (2011). The BIMAS is composed of 34 change-sensitive items that comprise five subscales, which address a range of behaviors that impact functioning in schools. Data can be aggregated, analyzed, and displayed graphically to increase accessibility for teachers and parents. The change-sensitive items allow for progress monitoring to determine if the interventions implemented at the district, school, grade, class, and individual level actually have an impact.

The Research Committee, under the leadership of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and the EWG developed a Research Committee with representatives from multiple agencies. The committee identifies key research and evaluation questions based on the outcomes articulated in the logic model, as well as reliable, relevant indicators of change. Support from agencies is also provided to build a database to track change over time at both the student and school levels (further information regarding the committee structures of CBHM is available at Pearrow, Amador, Denney, Cohen, et al., 2016). The committee has been working to monitor and analyze the data, and to draft authorship agreements that describe the intellectual rights and responsibilities of disclosure for individuals and organizations who work together on this project. A defining element of these agreements is the recognition of the efforts of school and district personnel who created, and continue to implement, the model. The role of evaluators and researchers is to complement these efforts by providing analysis and feedback, and in tandem, both parties learn together. While this has presented both challenges and opportunities, the partnership strategy of effectively sharing resources has built the capacity of the model, and as needed, has included bringing in additional community partners.

A main focus of the Research Committee is the identification of key process and outcomes questions and appropriate indicators of change with regard to these questions, as well as building a database to track change over time at both the student and school levels. The logic model guided these processes, as indicators of change were identified for each component of the logic model. This involved further collaboration in work groups, led by Research Committee, but including the voices of all stakeholders and community partners. Together, they identified which data sources are the most reliable, valid, relevant, frequent, and timely, as
The FAR tells you **why** a student struggles to read so that you can determine **how** to intervene.

The FAR is a comprehensive test designed to help you identify specific reading disorder subtypes, so you can truly individualize a child’s education plan with targeted interventions.

Learn more on PAR’s free Training Portal, accessible 24-7 at www.partrainingportal.com.

Order today. Visit www.parinc.com or call 1.800.331.8378.

This remains an ongoing process, as implementation continues to inform research, and research and evaluation efforts continue to inform implementation. In other words, data sources and tools are adapted in order to improve upon reliability, validity, relevance, frequency, and timeliness. This is just one example of how the Research Committee aims to be a model for data-based decision making and continuous improvement strategies. Given that the most important factor related to sustainability is the frequency of data review (McIntosh, Kim, Mercer, Stickland-Cohen, & Horner, 2015), the Research Committee has identified ways to ensure continuous review of data on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. On a monthly basis, a dashboard of district staff activities is reviewed, and outcomes are reviewed quarterly by EWG and annually presented to stakeholders outside EWG.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND PROGRESS

Overall, the students, schools, and district have seen growth with this integrated, public health approach to behavioral health. At the student level, we have seen improvements in students’ behavioral health outcomes, including decreases in areas of concern (e.g., conduct, negative affect, and attention/cognition) and increases in positive behaviors (e.g., social skills and academic functioning). These trends emerge across cohorts of schools that began implementation at different times. Across 3 years of implementation, our first 20 schools have demonstrated significant gains for those displaying some or high risk across all scales measured on the universal screener. These gains include decreases in problem behaviors and increases in positive behaviors. These findings are being extensively explored to identify differential benefits for groups of students and will be reported in other journal articles.

For schools, there has been an increased capacity among school psychologists, who have contributed to more than 200 in-service trainings for school-based staff through CBHM implementation. Ongoing evaluation, through the use of workshop evaluation surveys, suggests that school-based staff are learning more about how to create trauma-sensitive schools, manage behaviors in the classroom, and provide Tier 2 support services. The workshop evaluation data have also been organized so that reports are generated after each training to provide BHS staff with feedback regarding their training, which can be incorporated with the modeling and coaching that support teachers and overall implementation. For the school psychologists, our data indicate that staff are able to practice a broad range of behavioral health supports. These challenges include accessing school databases, combining and managing multiple data sources, selecting key outcome indicators among competing stakeholder agendas, and identifying a comprehensive plan controlling for complex differences across schools (Nabors, 2003). Though this project is not unique in confronting these challenges, it has benefited from the collective assets of the partnering agencies.

SUMMARY

The role of data, evaluation, and research has been a foundational component of CBHM. Partnerships between the district, university, and hospital brought several complementary agendas to the forefront, and an ongoing commitment to data and pursuit of collective goals has allowed this model to flourish. By capitalizing on the unique strengths and expertise of partners, CBHM has effectively continued to navigate these challenges. The benefits are being demonstrated by the increased capacity of schools to address the needs of their students and by the improved performance of the students. These benefits translate into gains for all partnering agencies, and the shared capacity highlights the strengths of each partner.

Our hope is that other districts can learn with us as we develop data systems that enhance support services to students and build effective school–community partnerships. We look forward to sharing more research findings through a variety of dissemination outlets as we continue to build these comprehensive supports.

REFERENCES

When your school turns to you in a crisis, will you be ready?

Based on the PREPaRE training curriculum, this new edition of the book combines the latest research with specific skill building techniques and practical tools to:

• Align safety and crisis planning with current federal guidance on comprehensive school emergency operations plans.
• Integrate school safety and crisis prevention and response efforts within a multitiered system of support.
• Respond effectively to promote crisis recovery and a return to learning.
• Collaborate with community-based emergency response services.
• Complement PREPaRE workshop participation and provide access to the curriculum for individuals who have not yet taken training.

View the table of contents at www.nasponline.org/publications.

Learn more about the curriculum at www.nasponline.org/prepare.
**How to Reconcile Requests for Special Education Evaluations With RTI**

By Daniel A. Osher

When a child’s parents request a special education evaluation, the school generally must promptly evaluate the student. However, many schools implement response to intervention (RTI) to provide students with regular education interventions prior to evaluating the student for special education eligibility. School psychologists may find themselves in situations where parents have requested a special education evaluation, but the school has not yet provided interventions through its RTI process. These situations are fraught with legal risks, but can be navigated to simultaneously meet the student’s needs, parents’ concerns, and legal requirements.

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has repeatedly stated that special education evaluations may not be delayed on the grounds that RTI has not yet been attempted (OSEP, 2011, 2016). While OSEP opinions are not technically legally binding, they do express the United States Department of Education’s position.

Daniel A. Osher is a graduate student in school psychology at the University of Minnesota. Prior to enrolling at the university, he was an attorney practicing in the field of special education law for approximately 15 years. Special thanks to Amanda Sullivan for helpful suggestions regarding the content of this article. The contents of this article were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H325K150304. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Bonnie Jones.

---

**Doctoral Program in School Psychology**

Specialist level school psychologists may apply for advanced standing, and enter at the PsyD level of the program. The PsyD level is compatible with full-time employment as a school psychologist, is APA Accredited and features:

- Summer (July/August) courses and late afternoon/evening school year courses
- Student-centered learning environment
- Leadership skills through systems perspective, personal growth, and self-reflection
- Experienced practitioner faculty

Visit [www.williamjames.edu/school](http://www.williamjames.edu/school) for more details.

---

**Professional Practice**

**How to Reconcile Requests for Special Education Evaluations With RTI**

**By Daniel A. Osher**

When a child’s parents request a special education evaluation, the school generally must promptly evaluate the student. However, many schools implement response to intervention (RTI) to provide students with regular education interventions prior to evaluating the student for special education eligibility. School psychologists may find themselves in situations where parents have requested a special education evaluation, but the school has not yet provided interventions through its RTI process. These situations are fraught with legal risks, but can be navigated to simultaneously meet the student’s needs, parents’ concerns, and legal requirements.

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has repeatedly stated that special education evaluations may not be delayed on the grounds that RTI has not yet been attempted (OSEP, 2011, 2016). While OSEP opinions are not technically legally binding, they do express the United States Department of Education’s position.

Daniel A. Osher is a graduate student in school psychology at the University of Minnesota. Prior to enrolling at the university, he was an attorney practicing in the field of special education law for approximately 15 years. Special thanks to Amanda Sullivan for helpful suggestions regarding the content of this article. The contents of this article were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H325K150304. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Bonnie Jones.

---

**Advance Your Career in School Psychology**

**APA Accredited**

School Psychology, PsyD

Application Deadline: Rolling Admissions on a space available basis

School Psychology, MA/CAGS/PsyD

Application Deadline: Rolling Admissions on a space available basis

Visit [www.williamjames.edu/openhouse](http://www.williamjames.edu/openhouse) to register for a program webinar.
of Education’s interpretation of the law, and are routinely accorded weight by compliance monitoring officials, judges, and due process hearing officers. OSEP (2011, p. 1) stated:

[It] is critical that this identification [of special education eligibility] occur in a timely manner and that no procedures or practices result in delaying or denying this identification... States and [local educational agencies] have an obligation to ensure that evaluations of children suspected of having a disability are not delayed or denied because of implementation of an RTI strategy.

Consistent with OSEP’s interpretation, state due process decisions and federal Office for Civil Rights investigations have found school districts in violation of their special education and Section 504 child find obligations for delaying evaluation while RTI was pending (see, e.g., Acalanes Union High School District, 2005; Sacramento City School District, 2012).

Thus, when parents request an evaluation, the school must take action, regardless of the status of RTI. However, when faced with a parent’s request for evaluation prior to completion of RTI, school psychologists have several options, including:

- Request that the parents withdraw their request for evaluation pending evaluation,
- Conduct the evaluation, and integrate RTI into the evaluation,
- Conduct the evaluation independent of RTI, or
- Decline to evaluate the student (risky!).

Each of these options is discussed below.

ASK PARENTS TO WITHDRAW REQUEST FOR EVALUATION

While school personnel absolutely cannot require parents to withdraw a request for evaluation, we may request that they do so. Such a request must be made in a way that is respectful to the parents and compliant with the law. In particular, the parents must have been fully informed of all relevant information, and their consent to withdraw the request must be voluntary and in writing (34 C.F.R. § 300.9).

To ensure sufficiently informed consent, school psychologists should meet with the parents, discuss the parents’ reasons for requesting the evaluation, and address any concerns with RTI. The psychologist should explain in detail the timelines for the RTI process, the decisions that will be made at various steps in the process, and the notification that parents will receive. Parents should be given a copy of their special education procedural rights and safeguards at this meeting, the rights should be explained to ensure understanding, and parents should have the opportunity to ask any questions about those rights.

The school psychologist should emphasize that the choice belongs to the parents, and that if they wish the evaluation to proceed immediately, the school will honor that decision or formally decline to evaluate with appropriate prior written notice. If the parent agrees to withdraw the request, we strongly encourage the school to obtain the withdrawal in writing—in one recent case, a district argued that the parent had orally agreed to withdraw the request, but was unable to prove it when the parents denied ever giving consent (Sacramento City School District, 2012).

The advantages of delaying the evaluation with proper parent consent are that the school may be able to avoid the time and expense of evaluating the student if the planned intervention is successful, and will be able to use data from RTI in an evaluation if such evaluation is ultimately needed. In addition, the student will receive assistance in a more timely manner. The disadvantage is that, if the student ultimately qualifies for special education, postponing the evaluation could delay the provision of needed special education services.

CONDUCT THE EVALUATION AND INTEGRATE RTI

If the parent does not agree to postpone the evaluation to allow RTI to run its course, the school could still incorporate the planned processes—albeit on an abbreviated timeline—into the evaluation. Indeed, some states or school districts may require schools to consider the effectiveness of RTI when determining eligibility for specific learning disability (SLD; 34 C.F.R. § 300.307(a)(2)). Using RTI as part of the evaluation can provide richer detail and insight into the student’s unique needs and abilities as they relate to the educational setting. In particular, it can provide data about how a student responds to various types of intervention, informing future intervention planning. The primary disadvantage of this approach is that, because evaluation timelines are short, interventions would need to begin at the very start of the assessment process to provide meaningful data by the time the evaluation is due. The evaluation team would need to employ excellent time management and organization to ensure that RTI can properly be implemented during the evaluation timeline.

CONDUCT THE EVALUATION INDEPENDENT OF RTI

If the school does not ask the parents to postpone the evaluation, or if the parent does not consent, then the school must complete the evaluation within the legal timeline. If the state’s SLD eligibility criteria do not require the use of RTI, or if the student is being evaluated for a disability other than SLD, then the school can evaluate the student without giving further consideration of RTI. The advantage of this approach is that it may be faster and easier than an evaluation that integrates RTI data. However, such an evaluation may not provide as complete a portrait of the student’s unique needs as could be obtained by including RTI.

DECLINE TO EVALUATE

Finally, a school may decline the parent’s request to evaluate the student if they believe that the child is not at risk for having a disability. This approach carries substantial legal risks, and I recommend consulting with district administration or legal counsel before refusing a parent’s request for an evaluation. School districts have a “child find” obligation to identify and evaluate all students who need special education (34 C.F.R. § 300.111(c)(1)). Accordingly, when a school has reason to suspect that a child has a qualifying disability, it is required to evaluate that student (e.g., Dept. of Educ., State of Hawaii v. Carl Rae S., 2001). This is an easy standard to meet, and a parental request for evaluation often contains enough information to give rise to a suspicion that a child has a qualifying disability. If the school refuses to evaluate despite this information, it has violated the child find requirement. Additionally, if the district declines to evaluate, the parents could obtain a private evaluation which could find that the child meets eligibility requirements. The parents could urge that evaluation in legal action against the district, seeking reimbursement for the cost of the private evaluation, compensatory services, and attorney fees. The greatest challenge in defending these cases is that, while parents have a detailed evaluation establishing the student’s eligibility, the school district has no evaluative basis of its own, because it declined to conduct one.

If the school is certain that the child does not have a disability, it can choose to decline to evaluate the student even upon parent request. This has the advantage of saving the time and effort of conducting a needless evaluation. However, this approach is also likely to damage the relationship between the school and parent, and could subject the school to legal liability as discussed above. If the school takes this course of action, it must provide a detailed prior written notice to the parents, explaining, among other things, the factual basis for the school’s decision (34 C.F.R. § 300.503). The school should also give the parents a copy of the notice of procedural rights and safeguards at this time.

CONCLUSION

The laws governing RTI and initial evaluation do not appear to have been carefully designed to work together. This leads to tricky situations for school districts, and especially school psychologists. However, by working with parents and analyzing the specific facts of the situations, school psychologists can manage RTI and evaluations consistent with the law and respectful of the parents’ needs and wishes. ■

References


Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 303.300, as amended (2011).


Sacramento City Unified School District, 112 LRP 57711 (SEA CA 2012).

Consistent with OSEP’s interpretation, state due process decisions and federal Office for Civil Rights investigations have found school districts in violation of their special education and Section 504 child find obligations for delaying evaluation while RTI was pending.
A Resource Guide to Remediating the School Psychology Shortages Crisis

By Joel O. Bocanegra, Sally L. Grapin, Leah M. Nellis, & Eric Rossen

Shortages in school psychology have long impacted the field. Arguments for an expanded workforce date back to the earliest days of school psychology, and concerns regarding shortages have persisted ever since. In fact, “... it appears there has never been a time when the supply of school psychologists was sufficient to meet the demand” (Pagan, 2004, p. 419). Unfortunately, without intentional efforts to address these shortages, they are likely to continue into the foreseeable future (Castillo, Curtis, & Tan, 2014).

Defining the scope and nature of the shortages problem, however, is complex and goes beyond merely comparing numbers of available practitioners and positions. In fact, the complexities of this problem have prompted a shift in terminology away from “shortages of school psychologists” to “shortages in school psychology.” Broadly, however, we can define shortages as an imbalance in supply and demand.

Defining Shortages as a Supply and Demand Imbalance

Shortages typically refer to an insufficient number of available practitioners (i.e., supply) in relation to job vacancies (i.e., demand). However, we may also find supply deficits in culturally and linguistically diverse practitioners and faculty, accredited internships, graduate preparation programs, prospective program applicants, and respecialization opportunities.

Regional specificity further compounds the complexity of shortages. In certain areas (e.g., New York), there is an insufficient supply of jobs available given the number of school psychologists and graduate preparation programs; whereas in other areas (e.g., rural communities), positions may remain vacant for years without a single applicant. Program applications reflect a similar trend, with some programs reporting as many as 140 applicants in the last year, and others reporting none (Gadke, Valley-Gray, & Rossen, 2016).

Our understanding of demand must go beyond quantifying unfilled positions to incorporate considerations of need. For example, NASP (2010) recommends that local education agencies (LEAs) employ at least one school psychologist for every 200–700 students served in K-12 settings in order to provide a comprehensive range of services; however, estimates of current national practitioner-to-student ratios are more than double this recommendation. Larger practitioner-to-student ratios can result in school psychologists managing excessively large caseloads, which subsequently may limit their ability to provide a range of essential prevention and intervention services. Even if the profession were to maintain a perfect balance of supply and demand with respect to numbers, they are likely to continue into the foreseeable future (Castillo, Curtis, & Tan, 2014).

To illustrate this point, consider fruit and vegetable consumption in the world. The World Health Organization has generated global dietary guidelines recommending at least five servings of fruits or vegetables per day. However, a recent study found that the global supply of fruits and vegetables falls 22% short of meeting the population’s need according to the recommended guidelines, and as much as 95% short in some countries (Siegel, Ali, Srinivasiah, Nugent, & Naranayan, 2014). Even among communities that maintain sufficient supply to meet the consumer demand for fruits and vegetables, the supply may not be sufficient to meet an agreed upon and established need. Thus, even with a sufficient inventory of fruits and vegetables, global dietary guidelines may still not be met. Similarly, unless the complexity and impact of shortages in school psychology are fully understood and addressed through context-specific strategies, the needs of students, families, and schools may remain unmet.

The Importance of Overcoming Shortages

School psychologists often wear many hats. They are specialists in assessment, intervention, consultation, and system change. They are also researchers, educators, and counselors. They are knowledgeable about behavioral change, mental health concerns, culturally responsive practice, and education law. They are critical, often irreplaceable, personnel in many schools. However, shortages in school psychology undermine attempts to move schools from a traditional “referred education” framework to a prevention-oriented, multitiered system of support (MTSS) approach. The shortages crisis severely threatens the viability of the comprehensive model of service delivery described in the NASP Practice Model (NASP, 2010), the vitality of the profession, and the quality of current and future service provision.

For example, shortages of school psychologists will likely force some school districts to concentrate their limited personnel resources on legally mandated services (e.g., special education evaluations) at the expense of providing other nonmandated but essential prevention and intervention services (e.g., mental and behavioral health services, academic and behavioral consultation, bullying and violence prevention). Furthermore, larger caseloads and more restrictive roles for school psychologists have been associated with burnout and attrition in similar professions (Salyers et al., 2016). Additionally, severe shortages have caused some districts to resort to alternative means of providing mandated psychoeducational services, such as contracting outside professionals (e.g., clinical psychologists) who are less familiar with the school’s culture; issuing emergency certifications to less qualified professionals; forcing school and district leaders to pursue additional certifications in order to serve dual roles; and reclassifying vacant school psychology positions as other related positions (e.g., behavior analysts and educational diagnosticians).

The shortages crisis is even more pronounced when examining the number of racial and ethnic minorities represented in the field. Currently, approximately 13% of school psychologists identify as racial/ethnic minorities (Walcott, Charvat, McNamara, & Hyson, 2016), as compared with 49% of U.S. public school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Aims and Development of the Shortages in School Psychology Resource Guide

The Shortages in School Psychology Resource Guide (NASP, 2016a; referred to henceforth as the Resource Guide) was developed to provide a comprehensive list of recommendations for expanding and diversifying the school psychology workforce. More specifically, the guide presents strategies that have been proposed or implemented in school psychology and other related professions (e.g., teaching). It is intended for use by a variety of relevant stakeholder groups, including professional organizations (e.g., state school psychology associations), state and local education agencies, postsecondary institutions, and practicing school psychologists.

The Resource Guide was developed by an appointed task force of 10 NASP members. Task force members included practitioners, graduate educators, NASP leaders, and NASP professional staff. To formulate recommendations, members reviewed peer-reviewed journal articles, policy briefs, and related literature on shortages across a variety of fields related to psychology, education, and human services. These areas included clinical psychology, counseling psychology, social work, school counseling, teaching, speech and language pathology, and occupational therapy, and school psychology.

The resulting Resource Guide consists of two sections: recruitment and retention. Recruitment refers to the enlistment of individuals in graduate preparation programs and professional positions (e.g., practitioner and faculty jobs), especially those for whom the demand exceeds the supply. Retention refers to the persistence of qualified candidates in graduate preparation programs and professional positions, especially those positions that have been historically hard to fill or subject to turnover. Broadly, the guide focuses on strategies for recruiting and retaining graduate students, practitioners, and graduate educators. The guide also provides recruitment and retention strategies designed to increase cultural and linguistic diversity among preservice and professional school psychologists.

At this time, the empirical literature on effective recruitment and retention practices in school psychology is limited (Proctor & Romano, 2016). The task force’s main goal was to summarize existing recommendations and, where applicable, to direct users to relevant research and resources. The final version of

Joel O. Bocanegra, PhD, NCSP, is an assistant professor in school psychology at Idaho State University; Sally L. Grapin, PhD, NCSP, is an assistant professor in the psychology department at Montclair State University; Leah M. Nellis, PhD, NCSP, is a graduate educator in the school psychology program at Indiana State University; Eric Rossen, PhD, NCSP, is NASP Director, Standards and Professional Development.
The shortages crisis is even more pronounced when examining the number of racial and ethnic minorities represented in the field. Currently, approximately 13% of school psychologists identify as racial/ethnic minorities, as compared with 49% of U.S. public school students.

RECRUITMENT

The Recruitment section of the guide comprises three primary subsections. The first section presents general recommendations, such as developing incentives for entering the profession, increasing the visibility of job openings, and advertising the personal and professional benefits of a career in school psychology. The latter two sections describe specific recommendations for practitioner and faculty recruitment.

Recommendations for recruiting practitioners are further subdivided into strategies for recruiting high school students, undergraduate students, and professionals interested in respecialization (e.g., teachers, clinical psychologists, counselors). Strategies for recruiting high school students include incorporating school psychology in Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology classes, offering career mentorship programs that provide an introduction to the profession, and encouraging early involvement in state and national organizations. Strategies for recruiting postsecondary students include offering undergraduate school psychology courses, providing opportunities for field-based shadowing experiences, and encouraging early involvement in school psychology research.

Strategies for recruiting individuals who are interested in respecialization center on making graduate preparation more accessible and flexible through distance learning technology or flexible options for scheduling (e.g., evening or weekend courses, part-time enrollment). The guide also encourages practitioners, school psychologists to reach out to colleagues in related fields who may have an interest in a career in school psychology.

Recommendations for bolstering faculty recruitment primarily involve providing school psychology graduate students with opportunities to cultivate their skills in university teaching and research. Specifically, they include providing comprehensive research mentorship, offering seminars that orient students to academic careers, and modeling healthy lifestyles.

Finally, both the practitioner and faculty sections offer targeted strategies for increasing the representation of individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds. Although these strategies are listed as distinct sections (for emphasis), they must be integrally embedded in recruitment plans and must not be regarded as supplements or afterthoughts to core strategies. For recruiting graduate students, these strategies involve increasing preapplication contact and admissions measures to improve university climate and increasing opportunities for minorized graduate students to work with mentors from similar backgrounds.

RENTENTION

The Retention section of the guide focuses on strategies for ensuring that individuals remain in their current positions. While these strategies apply most directly to practitioners, they also are relevant for graduate students and educators. Attrition from the field can occur for many reasons, including burnout, professional dissatisfaction, and issues pertaining to systems-level infrastructure. Strategies in this section are designed to reduce the likelihood of job and position changes, gaps in employment due to leaves or part-time schedules, and attrition from the profession.

Continued growth and professional development can support retention in the field. For example, mentoring and induction programs provide invaluable peer support during one’s early career years as well as during career transitions. NASP (2016b) provides guidance for establishing and facilitating postgraduate peer mentorships that benefit both mentees and mentors. Supportive supervision also promotes professional growth, enhanced services, and shared understanding of the challenges and logistics of the school psychologist’s role. Specifically, professional supervision, which refers to the oversight of an individual’s practice and service delivery, may play a critical role in reducing stress and burnout among practitioners while also fostering their professional growth (Harvey & Struzziore, 2008).

Ensuring opportunities to engage in relevant and meaningful learning can contribute to an individual’s sense of professional identity, begin in their immediate employment context and in the larger profession. Pursuing specific areas of interest through conference attendance and professional networking can be both rewarding and invigorating for practitioners. When administrators show support for these types of pursuits, they affirm their staff’s evolving contributions to the school.

Additionally, providing and supporting opportunities for advancement and leadership can foster professional satisfaction. These opportunities may include supervising practicum students or interns, serving as a mentor or lead school psychologist, participating in school leadership teams, and assuming leadership roles in regional and national associations. Generally, being acknowledged and recognized for one’s work and dedication is rewarding and can support retention. Examples of recognition include local or state level awards, luncheons, ceremonies, thank you notes, and celebration of School Psychology Awareness Week.

School psychologists who work in more positive and supportive environments are more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction and less likely to report burnout (DeLunzio, 2013). While this includes having a dedicated office space, materials, equipment, and clerical assistance, the nature of one’s work and roles is even more important. The often-experienced dissonance between role expectations and preservice preparation, and the reality of a narrowly focused school psychology position, is all too common. School psychologists who are more integrated in their school environments are likely to have more comprehensive roles and are less likely to experience burnout (Proctor & Steadman, 2005). Creating opportunities for school psychologists to provide prevention, intervention, and consultation services to address the mental health, behavioral, and academic needs of students is critical for promoting retention.

Moreover, supporting staffing ratios that allow for the provision of a diverse range of high-quality services is important as well. Collaborative school cultures that foster team work, strong family–school–community partnerships, and coordinated student services can promote trust and respect among colleagues and increase professional satisfaction (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Finally, recommendations for retaining CLD graduate students and educators involve fostering a sense of belongingness and perceived self-efficacy as well as creating culturally responsive professional environments that welcome and value the contributions of all individuals.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Shortages in school psychology present a complex problem that warrants immediate and comprehensive efforts on the part of school leaders, current practitioners, professional organizations, and other stakeholders. The Shortages in School Psychology Resource Guide was developed by an appointed task force within NASP to offer recommendations for increasing recruitment and retention in a variety of employment contexts. The Resource Guide is available under the Resources & Publications section in the NASP website, for both members and nonmembers, or at http://www.nasp-online.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-psychology/shortages-in-school-psychology-resource-guide.

We encourage practitioners, graduate educators, and others to review this guide carefully and to consider taking the following steps:

- Educate peers, colleagues, employers, and other stakeholders about the shortages crisis and its implications. The introduction of the Resource Guide provides a number of helpful points and references to support these efforts.

- Use the Resource Guide to facilitate a needs assessment in your current work environment. For example, consider questions such as: (a) Is your setting adequately recruiting and supporting school psychologists? (b) Is there a need for greater cultural and linguistic diversity? and (c) Are any current recruitment or retention strategies having an adequate and positive impact?

- Identify relevant needs and strategies and take action. The Resource Guide provides relevant suggestions for increasing recruitment and retention. Identify contextually appropriate recommendations for your respective setting and advocate for their implementation. If resources are limited, consider identifying one strategy to pursue in the coming semester or year.

Without intentional and comprehensive reform efforts, shortages in school psychology are likely to persist indefinitely and to have negative consequences for school systems, students, families, and the profession. Conversely, taking
measures to increase recruitment and retention may lead to higher quality services for children and families as well as enhance the vitality and visibility of the field as a whole.

References

ASSESS FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENT ACROSS 6 IMPORTANT LIFE AREAS.
roles that focus on special education issues (including the paperwork, which can often be quite onerous).

A significant obstacle to our advocacy effort to transform the role of the school psychologist according to ESSA is the manner in which other school personnel, including administrators, view school psychologists. In general, the only experience most school administrators have in working with school psychologists is in the context of the child study team or case manager role. These school leaders often do not consider involving the school psychologists in prevention and early intervention (let alone strategic or systems-level change) activities outside of their assigned duties. Some may also be concerned about school psychologists moving into expanded roles and how that would affect their ability to meet their special education responsibilities in a timely manner.

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

The advent of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) stimulated discussions at NJASP regarding how ESSA might be a vehicle for transforming the role of school psychologists in New Jersey. At the initial discussion, several significant obstacles to achieving this goal were identified. The biggest was (and is) the current role of the school psychologist in New Jersey as described above. Most school psychologists, given their current job descriptions, have very full schedules and responsibilities. They work very long days, and often take paperwork home at night so as to meet their obligations regarding timelines and legal compliance. To tell our New Jersey school psychologists to now expand their role would be a message that would probably not be well received, and understandably so. To deal with this challenge, NJASP leaders have attempted to reframe this discussion, and instead of talking about expanding the role, we have talked about fulfilling or transforming the role, which might tap into school psychologists’ often cited reason for joining the profession; specifically, to make a difference. This transformed role would be defined by the provision of comprehensive school psychological services to all children, such as providing mental health services, implementing positive behavior supports and social–emotional learning programs, and participating in efforts related to school climate and safety. Our Government and Professional Relations (GPR) and Professional Development committees worked to collaborate with our Conference Planning committee to develop trainings for our members in these domains in order to help school psychologists gain confidence in their skills to take on the new roles.

DEVELOPING ADVOCACY RELATIONSHIPS

We concluded that any attempts to transform our role within the context of ESSA would need to start with collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), as they would be responsible for implementing ESSA statewide. We felt that the first step we needed to take was to meet with officials from the NJDOE. Fortunately, through our past advocacy efforts, NJASP had established a relationship with the department, though it usually revolved around issues related to special education. However, the NJDOE officials had always been willing to meet with us and, indeed, they agreed to meet with us to discuss ESSA. The meeting included the assistant commissioner of education, the deputy chief learning supports and specialized services officer, and the acting director of special education programs. We felt it was important to bring us literature and data to support our request. Fortunately, NASP had developed materials that described the role of the school psychologist in working within an ESSA framework. The document Leveraging Essential School Practices, ESSA, MTSS, and the NASP Practice Model: A Crosswalk to Help Every School and Student Succeed was particularly valuable, as it described in great detail the intersection of ESSA, multitiered systems of support (MTSS), and how school psychologists can play a valuable role in providing much needed services.

PRESENTING THE DATA

Our GPR and Professional Development committees developed a fact sheet describing how school psychologists in New Jersey fit neatly into the framework for ESSA. Finally, we brought in data from a survey we had conducted several years prior, which clearly demonstrated the desire of school psychologists in New Jersey to be more involved in providing services related prevention, early intervention, mental health services, program development, and other critical areas. Our goal was to communicate that we are interested in not only providing services under ESSA, but also in being involved in the planning and implementation of ESSA. The officials from NJDOE told us that they appreciated and valued the material we supplied, and later invited us to participate in the stakeholder’s panel that would be addressing the implementation of ESSA.

LINKING PROGRAMS AND GOALS

Concurrent with the reauthorization of ESSA, NJDOE was beginning to develop strategies for implementing MTSS in New Jersey. The NJDOE assembled a stakeholder group to work on issues relating to implementing MTSS, including parents, teachers, school administrators, and other relevant groups. Due to NJASP’s ongoing positive relationship with the NJDOE, three NJASP leaders and members were asked to serve on this committee. The underpinnings of MTSS (providing comprehensive services to all children using a tiered system of supports) melded perfectly with goals of ESSA and our NJASP representatives were eager to contribute.

ADVOCACY ACTIONS

In the subsequent months, we have continued to promote the role of school psychologists in the implementation of ESSA. The NJASP home page features a considerable amount of information regarding ESSA and why it is important to school psychologists. Earlier this fall, the NJDOE held what it called “Listening and Learning Sessions” in various parts of New Jersey, where NJDOE officials offered opportunities for stakeholders and other interested parties to provide testimony regarding ESSA. NJASP organized its resources and had NJASP representatives at each location testifying as to the role that school psychologists can play in implementing ESSA. In addition, leaders from NJASP recently presented to the master’s and doctoral students at Fairleigh Dickinson University regarding ESSA, and to doctoral students at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University, in hopes of inspiring advocacy activities in graduate training programs. To increase advocacy efforts across stakeholder groups, NJASP was recently an exhibitor at the New Jersey Association of Principals and Supervisors Association conference, where we provided information regarding the various untapped ways in which school psychologists could be a valuable resource. Our table included a section on ESSA, based in large measure on materials developed by NASP. We felt this could be a particularly effective way to communicate with principals and supervisors, who are key players in determining the role of school psychologists in their school districts. As noted above, many, if not most administrators only see school psychologists within the context of the child study team/case manager/assessment model, and may not be aware of the full range of services school psychologists can provide.

FUTURE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

NJASP plans to continue to advocate for a role in the planning and implementation of ESSA in New Jersey. We regularly invite the assistant commissioner of education and the deputy chief learning supports and specialized services officer to attend our state conference as our guests. Although the state representatives have not yet been able to attend, we believe that the open invitation encourages an ongoing positive relationship. At our 2016 winter conference, the keynote address, given by Dr. Maurice Elias, was entitled, “ESSA, School Climate, and Social–Emotional Competence and Character: Opportunities and Challenges for the Role of School Psychologists.” Feedback from the conference strongly indicated that the message was inspirational, which we hope can lead to transforming our role. We believe this can be an effective way to reinforce our interest in participating in the ESSA process and in developing the role school psychologists can play in providing services consistent with ESSA and MTSS. In addition, we want to keep the momentum building, and NJASP is planning a workshop for our 2017 spring conference that will focus on advocacy and ESSA. With the combined efforts of our Government and Professional Relations, Professional Development, and Conference Planning committees, we believe that we will be successful at coordinating our advocacy efforts with the training our members may need. In addition, with members of our executive board serving on the NJDOE stakeholders focus group, NJASP will have the opportunity to assist in planning the implementation of ESSA. We are hopeful that our working with the NJDOE and the New Jersey principals and supervisors, as well as continuing to educate our members, will result in the transformation of the school psychologist’s role and in providing comprehensive school psychological services in a manner consistent with ESSA.
Preparing in the Trenches: How to Market Yourself for a Job in Academia

By Daniel F. McCleary

There is a growing concern about the shortage of school psychologists, both in practice and in academia. In fact, it is of such concern that the shortage was a topic of discussion at the 2002 Multisite Conference on the Future of School Psychology (Dawson, Cummings, Short, Gorin, & Palomares, 2004). Although it is not a new phenomenon and has persisted since the 1980s, the increasing shortage of school psychologists is beginning to seriously impact the delivery of services, both inside the schools and in academia (e.g., Curtis, Hunley, Walker, & Baker, 1999; Dawson et al., 2004; Miller & Palomares, 2000; Thomas, 2000). It has been projected that two out of three school psychologists employed in the year 2000 would retire by 2020 (Curtis, Grier, & Hunley, 2004), potentially leaving a significant number of school psychology positions unfilled. Specifically, states like Michigan and Ohio have recently reported critical shortages of school psychologists, creating a gap in the quality and quantity of services provided to students (State of Michigan Department of Education, 2013; R. VanVoorhis, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) suggests that one reason for the growing shortage is that current school psychology training programs do not meet the increasing demand for school psychologists, partially due to the lack of qualified faculty (NASP, 2006). The number of faculty retiring or expected to retire from academia greatly exceeds the number of potential new faculty. In 2015, the projected retirement rate for school psychology faculty was 18.7% higher than expected, and that percentage remains at similar projected rates through the year 2025 (Castillo, Curtis, & Tan, 2014). The majority of resignations have been faculty at the assistant professor rank, thus leaving a large number of assistant professor positions left to be filled (Clayton & Haselhuhn, 2009).

There is an increasing number of unfilled faculty positions in school psychology and a reduced number of applicants seeking to enter academia. In fact, in a national survey of school psychology training programs, 73% of program directors indicated that they had difficulty filling vacant positions due to a lack of qualified applicants. The areas of concern when hiring an applicant included a lack of classroom teaching experience, and lack of preparation to teach (Clayton & Haselhuhn, 2009). Although applicants coming directly from doctoral graduate programs are able to fulfill many of these criteria, recent graduates may lack extensive experience as a practitioner. In recent years, there have been several articles within the school psychology literature as well as presentations at the NASP annual convention about faculty careers; however, most are not geared toward potential applicants coming from a practitioner role (e.g., Hansen-Burke & Buerkle, 2015; Harris, Jones, Sullivan, & Zibulsky, 2014; Kaufman, Valley-Gray, & Riccio, 2012; Tysinger, Diamanduros, & Tysinger, 2010).

New school psychology faculty often move directly from graduate school to faculty appointments. However, school psychologists who work in schools first (i.e., before seeking an academic career) have a unique set of experiences that can make them especially well-suited for faculty positions. When working in a school setting, school psychologists are responsible for using the knowledge gained in graduate school to deliver services at both the student and system levels. Practitioners in school settings complete comprehensive assessments, conduct individual and group interventions, consult and collaborate with teachers and administrators, and develop and implement school-wide preventive and responsive services such as multitiered systems of support (MTSS), response to intervention (RTI), and positive behavior support (PBS). School psychologists are able to understand the needs that classroom teachers, administrators, and other support staff have for consultation and intervention in their schools and classrooms. This school-based experience can be a great resource when the practitioner moves into a faculty position because they have real-life experience applying skills that they are teaching their students.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE IN ACADEMIA

Typical faculty responsibilities encompass three areas: research; teaching and supervision; and service to the university, community, and profession (Harris & Sullivan, 2012). Research duties may include conducting innovative and new research projects; publishing journal articles, books, book chapters, and technical reports; securing internal and external grant funding; and presenting at local, regional, and national conferences. Teaching and supervision includes not only preparing and teaching courses, but also providing academic advising and mentoring to students, and supervising practicum and fieldwork. Service requirements often encompass a program, department, college, and university committee membership, but also include leadership, community service related to the profession, and affiliation and participation in local and national professional organizations. Although most faculty engage in all three of these roles, the amount of time devoted to each may significantly differ depending on the type of faculty position. There are many types of faculty positions available in academia, both at the doctorate and the specialist levels.

TENURE-TRACK POSITIONS

A tenure-track faculty position is one that will potentially lead to tenure, or the ability to not be terminated without considerable cause (Harris & Sullivan, 2012). Most tenure-track positions reserve the first 4 to 6 years as a probationary period to allow for the faculty member to demonstrate a record of research, teaching, and service worthy of attaining tenure at that university. Tenure-track positions differ based on the type of university. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education provides a classification of universities based on the amount of research productivity (Carnegie, 2015). At research-intensive universities, called R1 universities, research productivity is prioritized with an expectation of several publications and presentations per year as well as substantial grant funding. Research activities make up between 40% and 60% of the weekly workload. The teaching load for these universities is lower than other universities, generally requiring one to two courses taught per semester (Harris et al., 2014).

Faculty members in tenure-track positions at teaching universities or smaller state schools may have different expectations for their role. These universities, which are primarily masters or baccalaureate confering institutions, have a larger focus on teaching and advising, so the teaching load is higher than that of research-intensive universities. Many tenure-track faculty at teaching universities will teach three to four courses per semester, thus lowering the research expectations to between 20% and 40% of the weekly workload. Research productivity is still expected but at a lower rate than at a research-intensive university.

NONTENURE-TRACK POSITIONS

There are a number of positions available in academia other than tenure-track faculty positions. These positions include roles with a particular focus on clinical skills, teaching, or research. Other positions, such as a visiting professor appointment, may have a job description similar to that of a tenure-track faculty member, but the position is only for a set amount of time, usually 1 to 2 years (Harris & Sullivan, 2012). Research professorships are often grant related and, again, are only for a specific amount of time, usually the duration of the research grant. These faculty members are responsible mainly for the collection and dissemination of data related to a particular project.

Many nontenure-track positions focus on teaching. Instructors, teaching professors, or lecturers are primarily responsible for teaching courses. These faculty members will teach between three and five courses per semester with low or no expectations for service or research, although depending on the university, a small amount of advising and service may be included in this job. Adjunct instructors are hired to teach a specific course or courses. They will often be used on an as-needed basis and may or may not be reappointed each semester. Some positions may be full-time, and the number of courses taught varies. Adjunct instructors are responsible only for fulfilling the teaching duties of their particular course. Teaching positions are sometimes reserved for those with a doctorate degree, but oftentimes faculty with a masters or specialist degree are hired for a primarily teaching position.

Clinical faculty positions are common in programs that focus on practice and field work. Titles for this type of position may include clinical professor, director, coordinator, field supervisor, or professor of practice (Hansen-Burke & Buerkle, 2015). These positions are often associated with lower salaries than tenure-track positions. The primary job responsibilities for clinical faculty include practicum supervision, coordinating fieldwork experiences, and advising students. Clinical faculty may also coordinate on-campus clinics. Many times, clinical faculty have extensive experience as a practitioner first, whether in a public school set-
When applying for an academic position, having a strong record of scholarship is advantageous. Institutions of higher learning are interested in individuals who are respected within their specific field and will bring national or international attention to the university. Not only will the elevated attention enhance the reputation of the institution and the position for which an applicant is applying, but also may increase enrollment and the quality of students applying.

Collaborate and publish. As a very general rule of thumb, applicants should have at least three publications; however, this figure may differ depending on the institution and the position for which an applicant is applying. For example, certain universities focus more on teaching than research. In this case, a meager publication record is unlikely to dramatically affect an interview offer, whereas at an R1 institution applicants may be expected to have far more than three peer-reviewed publications to receive an invitation to interview for a position. In addition, if applying for a non-tenure track position (e.g., clinic director, adjunct, lecturer) the number of publications may be entirely irrelevant to the search committee.

Although having few publications does not necessarily preclude an applicant from securing an interview, some practitioners may seek to enhance their publication record before applying for an academic position. A potential starting point is to publish one’s thesis or dissertation because the majority of the work is already completed. That the data have already been collected, the document is already written and multiple reviewers (i.e., the committee) have provided extensive feedback allow the biggest task to reduce the thesis or dissertation to only the most salient aspects of the thesis or dissertation and updating the literature review with more recent references. Nonetheless, this is likely the least time- and resource-intensive way to get started with publishing. Practitioners or early career school psychologists may be unaccustomed to the process of receiving feedback, particularly an unfavorable decision, from a journal editor. However, a rejection or request for major revisions should not be viewed as a roadblock. Rather, reviewer and editor feedback can be used to substantially improve the paper and should be used to address the paper’s weaknesses as necessary and quickly resubmit to the journal or submit elsewhere.

Developing and submitting a manuscript based on a thesis or dissertation is often a process that is done independently or with assistance from an advisor. However, collaboration with former professors or classmates who have assumed faculty positions is also an excellent way to enhance research productivity. School psychology practitioners are in a unique position when working in the schools. Practitioners often have access to research participants and rapport with administrators, teachers, and parents to obtain informed consent methods. However, practitioners often lack the time to design, implement, and monitor research projects in a controlled manner. Practitioners without university credentials may also lack the ability to access online research databases, which are crucial for the development of a literature review. Therefore, reaching out to former professors or professors in a nearby institution of higher learning and offering to partner on research projects can be highly advantageous to both parties. Practitioners will then have access to vital resources like research databases, graduate student support, and technology for conducting data analysis, and university faculty benefit from having access to one or more schools with a population on site to monitor research activities. A practitioner–university partnership can also benefit university-enrolled graduate students, who could gain additional field experience while learning to engage in research through the process. Furthermore, graduate students who are able to build rapport with the school community may be allowed to complete their own thesis or dissertation study at the school or even be offered a practicum or internship position. An additional benefit of collaborating with others on research projects is that it maintains a professional working relationship. Having an open line of communication with a university faculty member may allow that professor to write stronger letters of reference for future applications (assuming the potential applicant has maintained professional dispositions).

Another way of developing and hopefully publishing a research project is to engage in program evaluation by analyzing data from school or district programs (e.g., evaluate the district’s RTI screening tool or the effectiveness of the school’s RTI interventions). The advantage of this approach is that the data is usually already collected, which saves additional time and resources. Program evaluation would likely be viewed positively by application committees, as it is included in the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (2010) and would be part of coursework in a school psychology program. In addition to program methods, practitioners are positioned to engage in a number of research topics using single-subject and small group designs, such as academic and behavior interventions; crisis response and recovery; bullying prevention programs; consultation practices; early literacy promotion; school readiness; MTSS services; and parent, educator, or school psychologist knowledge, attitude, or awareness of special topics such as RTI, placement in special education, suicide, assessment techniques, and mental health.

Reading and writing. Despite no longer having access to the databases available during graduate school, a practitioner can still remain familiar with current research by reading the newsletters and magazines that are sent as a benefit of professional membership (e.g., Communique, Monitor on Psychology, Americans Psychologist, state organization newsletter or journal). Research articles can also be accessed for free through Google and Google Scholar. Websites such as Inter-ventioncentral.org and ebi.missouri.edu are also great resources for academic and behavioral interventions. To this end, scheduling 30–60 minutes each week to read research or to write research will ensure an up-to-date knowledge base and forward momentum on publication goals.

INTERVIEWS

Regardless of the level of emphasis that the institution places on research, committees conducting interviews for a tenure-track position will certainly ask about research during the interview process. Applicants should be prepared to talk about what research they have published, current research projects, and plans for future research projects. When interviewing, an applicant should consider and be prepared to answer questions such as: What topics or areas are interesting and why? What topics were previously researched and why? What were the outcomes of the research studies? What could have been done differently? What type of follow-up research is warranted?

PRESENTATIONS

If an applicant does not have many publications, then presentations may be a good way to demonstrate research potential and communication abilities. Presentations are often easier to get accepted than publications, and many reviewers will provide feedback on written submissions. This information should be used to strengthen the presentation and can assist in turning a presentation into a publication. While attending conferences, it is important to interact with others in the field, make connections with those in academia, and attend sessions relevant to areas of research interest. Not only does this allow a potential applicant to become more visible in the field and create a professional network, but it also keeps practitioners informed about current research trends. Presentations at national conferences are generally more prestigious, as the submission and acceptance process is more competitive, but there is value in presenting at state, regional, and local conferences as well. The convention setting is conducive to building relationships with other professionals in a more collegial manner and may open doors to academic jobs in the area. Furthermore, state, regional, and local conferences are more cost effective in terms of travel and can demonstrate that a practitioner is invested in making a difference in the local community.

TEACHING

Some faculty position announcements require or prefer prior teaching experience. There are other ways to demonstrate teaching ability aside from being a graduate teaching assistant during graduate school. For example, practitioners have a variety of ways to practice and hone teaching skills in their own district and local area. School psychology practitioners may give presentations or workshops during school inservice or professional development days, for instance. A practitioner would be uniquely suited to give a didactic presentation for an internship training program or could guest lecture for graduate courses (e.g., ethics, introduction to school psychology, practicum) in a nearby school psychology training program. In a more formalized role, a school psychology practitioner could serve as an adjunct for local universities or consider teaching online courses. Whenever providing these types of services, a potential applicant should be sure to collect evaluation data from the audience. This information can be used to improve performance and to demonstrate teaching excellence or potential as part of an application to a faculty position. School psychologists can also consider joining professional organizations that would allow them to stay up to date on current research-based teaching strategies and issues within school psychology training. For instance, the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Division 4 (Society for the Teaching of Psychology) and Trainers of
Be prepared to make the right diagnosis

ADOS®-2 Clinical Workshop
sponsored by WPS

Early and accurate diagnosis is essential to effective treatment planning. With this 2-day workshop, you’ll benefit from the experience of expert instructors and observe an administration of the ADOS-2 to a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Learning objectives include:
- Identifying key features of the ADOS-2 approach
- Describing use of the ADOS-2 for operationalizing diagnostic criteria for ASD
- Demonstrating understanding of how to apply ADOS-2 codes
- Explaining issues in the clinical application of ADOS-2 results

$495
Includes the 2-day course, ADOS-2 Protocol Booklets, two DVDs focused on Modules 1–4, and one DVD/Guidebook focused on the Toddler Module.

www.wpspublish.com/ADOS-2workshop
Register now at $495
Western Psychological Services 800.648.8857

School Psychologists offer resources and educational opportunities that would benefit an individual considering applying for a faculty position.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
Licensure. Many graduate programs give preference to individuals who are licensed or license-eligible in their state. The level of licensure desired may depend on the degree that is being offered by the program; specialist-level programs may desire faculty members who are credentialed to practice in the schools, whereas doctoral programs may prefer individuals who are credentialed to practice in the schools and who are licensed psychologists. Other certifications that may enhance an applicant’s marketability include Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP), PREPared Trainer of Trainers, and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Instructor, among others. Holding the BCBA credential may be especially valuable to an institution, as that individual could likely teach in more than one department or program (e.g., school psychology program, BCBA program, and special education program).

It is important to explore the state’s licensure requirements early in the process of applying for a faculty position in that state. For example, what is the cost associated with the exams and application fees? What exams are required (e.g., Praxis, Examination of Professional Practice in Psychology [EPPP], EPPP Step 2, jurisprudence exam, oral exam)? Also, it is important to determine the timeline of licensure in accordance with the institution’s expectations for when the new hire will be licensed. It is important to know how frequently each licensure exam is offered and when the institution expects the new hire to fulfill duties requiring licensure.

Work experience. During the interview, the applicant should be prepared to discuss his or her current duties and responsibilities in current and previous jobs. Applicants should expect questions like: How did you influence your district or system? Tell us about any school-wide changes you participated in making? How will your experience in the schools benefit the program and the community? How will it enrich your teaching? In short, applicants should be prepared to discuss how previous applied experiences will ultimately benefit the students in the program.

SERVICE
The school psychology profession offers many ways to become involved in service activities. School psychology training programs are often in need of school- and clinic-based placements for practicum and internship opportunities. Being close to a university training program provides an opportunity for a practicing school psychologist to serve as a supervisor for practicum experiences. Supervising graduate students is often mutually beneficial for the supervisor and the training program. University training programs may offer various types of practica, such as assessment, consultation, or basic job shadowing. Serving as a supervisor can help a practitioner gain experience working with graduate students and provide an invaluable service to the local university. In some cases, graduate students in both specialist and doctorate programs may be looking for year-long internship placements which can be especially valuable to a school district, as the intern is often expected to work full-time. Practicing school psychologists are able to supervise internship students, particularly if they are able to provide the intern with an array of school psychology experiences.

Involvement in state and national organizations is another way to increase service to the profession. A practicing school psychologist can become a committee member at a state-level school psychology organization and eventually work up to a leadership role at both the state and national level. A simple way to become involved in school psychology organizations is volunteering to review convention proposals. Both APA and NASP put out open calls for proposal reviewers, professionals who can judge the appropriateness of proposals for the national conventions. Reviewing convention proposals requires only a short time commitment and is a service that can be continued on an annual basis.

Within the school environment, there are numerous opportunities for both school and district service. Participating in a school or district RTI or PBIS committee, crisis team, or leadership team enhances involvement in the administrative processes of the school or district and can help a practitioner learn how to influence systems change. Additionally, offering in-service or professional development opportunities for district employees provides experience in both teaching and service. Willingness to perform these types of tasks demonstrates that the applicant is prepared to go above and beyond the typical school psychologist role and will be a valuable asset to a university program as well.

CONCLUSION
Despite the plethora of academic job postings, many advertised school psychology positions go unfilled. By being purposefully proactive, practitioners can position themselves to meet the preferred applicant characteristics of a job adver-
tisement. Research, teaching, and service can all be cultivated outside of an academic position. Mindfully building one’s vita while continuing to practice in the field will enhance the level of interest from potential employers and give the applicant a greater leverage during contract negotiations.

References


Lisa has been the state association president and served on association committees in both Iowa and Nebraska. As author of more than 25 professional journal articles and 135 conference and association presentations across the country, she is a prolific writer and presenter.

Wendy Price has been elected as NASP secretary starting in July. Most recently, Wendy has been the NASP delegate from Massachusetts and the delegate representative for the Northeast Region to the NASP Board of Directors. She has been a practicing school psychologist since 2001 and currently works full-time at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, located on the south shore of Massachusetts, where she is also one of the faculty advisors for their Gay/Straight Alliance club (The Rainbow Alliance). She is passionate about her work to advocate for the safety and rights of LGBTQ youth.

As a graduate student field supervisor, Wendy provides a solid and comprehensive internship experience. As a state leader, she has been a member of the Massachusetts School Psychologists Association board of directors since 2001. She has held several board positions over the years, including MSPA president, Massachusetts delegate, cochair of Ethics, and cochair of Professional Development and Licensure.

Additionally, 17 new NASP state delegates were elected. Congratulations to all of the new leaders!

Central Region

Illinois

Katherine Townsend

Iowa

Brittney Bills

Michigan

Mary Nordeen

Minnesota

Kimberly Adams

Wisconsin

Katie Johnson

Northeast Region

Maine

Jayne Boulos

New Hampshire

Tari Selig

Pennsylvania

Jason Pedersen

Rhode Island

Kim Pristawa

Southeast Region

Alabama

Daniel Upchurch

Georgia

Catherine Ann Perkins

Louisiana

Constance Patterson

Mississippi

Kathleen Corprew

Western Region

Colorado

Andrea Clyne

Montana

Jillie Parker

New Mexico

Elsa Arroyos

Wyoming

Stacey Kern

We are looking forward to inviting you to join us in the historic and dynamic city of Manchester – one of the 10 must-visit cities (Lonely Planet, 2016).

There is something for everyone in Manchester with its vibrant arts, culture, sport, entertainment, history and music scene.

Charles Deupree, NCSP, is chair of the NASP Elections committee.

The vision of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life. NASP is committed to ensuring that all students—whatever their race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender (including identification and expression), sexual orientation, disability status, language proficiency, or immigration status—receive a high quality public education in a positive, safe, supportive, and inclusive educational environment that is free of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence and promotes student learning.

Critical to this effort is ensuring adequate and equitable access to school psychologists and comprehensive school psychological services. The 2017–2018 Public Policy and Legislative Platform represents overarching policy goals and recommendations that support the mission and vision of NASP, promote the guiding principles articulated in Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach and NASP position statements, and help advance the NASP key initiatives. The platform also includes specific legislative and regulatory goals for the first session of the 115th Congress. This document will be periodically updated to reflect new legislation or policy proposals relevant to our platform. Although this document is specific to federal policy issues, state school psychology associations could adapt these goals to fit the specific advocacy and policy goals of their states and local districts.

REMEDY THE SHORTAGES IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY:
KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

■ Ensure Congress, the Department of Education, and other relevant agencies prioritize technical assistance and guidance to assist state and district efforts to recruit and retain school psychologists. This includes a long-term and sustained commitment to align staffing ratios with recommendations generated from national professional organizations to allow for the delivery of a full range of services.

■ Expand Health Service Corps Loan Forgiveness grants to include licensed and/or certified school psychologists.

■ Secure Congressional appropriations to allow for loan forgiveness of school psychologists as granted under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

■ Encourage Congress and/or the Department of Education and relevant credentialing bodies to create pathways to grant credentialing reciprocity for school psychologists across state lines, such as the Nationally Certified School Psychologist certificate, to help remedy the shortages in rural and other underserved areas.

■ Maintain, at a minimum, level funding for Behavioral Health Workforce Grants, administered by HRSA, which provide financial support for school psychology interns with a specific focus on those serving in rural or underserved communities.

■ Amend federal data collections, such as the CRDC and other data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics, to collect and report data on the number of FTE school psychologists. Further, these collections should be amended to require the reporting of FTE school psychologists employed by the school district. Current data collections aggregate several professions into one category, resulting in the misrepresentation of available service professionals.

■ Advance legislation that increases access to fully certified and/or licensed school psychologists.

■ Restrict, minimize, or limit alternate or emergency credentialing that allows related professionals to supplant school psychologists when providing school psychological services.

Supporting Legislation
Increased Student Achievement Through Increased Student Support Act. Directs the Secretary of Education to award competitive, renewable, 5-year grants to partnerships between low-income local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools offering graduate programs in school counseling, social work, or psychology to increase the number of program graduates employed by low-income LEAs.

INCREASE ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES: KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

■ Secure adequate funding for Title I, Title II, and Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

■ Advance legislation that increases access to comprehensive school and community mental health services, and reduce disparities in mental health service delivery, especially among underserved populations.

■ Promote efforts to implement Mental Health First Aid and other relevant professional development for educators.

■ Advance efforts to increase funding to support trauma informed practices in schools.

■ Direct the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and other relevant federal agencies to provide incentives, guidance, and technical assistance for school districts to prioritize a multitiered system of support MTSS framework that includes both academic and mental and behavioral health services (including trauma-informed practices). This guidance should emphasize the importance of access to school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors) that can provide a comprehensive range of services within the school context, ranging from direct individual-level services to systems-level prevention and intervention services.

■ Ensure federal grants intended to improve school mental health service delivery, including the Full Service Community Schools program, advance school community mental health partnerships that:

- Supplement, not supplant, existing school based services.
- Clearly articulate the roles of school-employed and community-employed mental health professionals.
- Foster coordination and collaboration between school and community mental health professionals.

■ Demonstrate, through guidance from the Department of Education and other relevant agencies, how various funding streams can be used to provide ongoing high quality professional development related to effective delivery of high quality comprehensive mental health services.

■ Ensure school psychologists are properly recognized as qualified providers of mental and behavioral health in statute, regulation, and credentialing policy at the federal, state, and local level.

■ Protect Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program to ensure that low income children have access to comprehensive health care that includes mental and behavioral health.

■ Direct the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to update the Administrative Claiming Technical Assistance Guide, published in 1995, to reflect language in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that school psychologists are qualified providers of mental and behavioral health service. Further, the guide should clarify that this language, “Medicaid regulations require that provider qualifications be uniform and standard. This means that states cannot have one set of provider qualifications for school providers and another set of provider qualifications for all other providers,” does not mean that school psychologists, and other school professionals need to be credentialed to provide services in the school and community setting in order to be considered a qualified provider of Medicaid services.

■ Direct the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to issue guidance and technical assistance on how states can leverage the reversal of the Free Care rule to expand access to mental and behavioral health services in schools.

■ Elevate the role of school psychologists as mental and behavioral health providers in relevant materials published by the Department of Education, relevant agencies, and federally funded technical assistance centers.

Supporting Legislation
Mental Health in Schools Act. The Mental Health in Schools Act would provide funding for public schools across the country to partner with local mental health professionals to establish on-site mental health care services for students.
ENSURE ALL STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SUPPORTS PROVIDED WITHIN AN INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM (E.G., MTSS): KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Maintain regulatory language in relevant education legislation that allows federal funds to be used to implement MTSS and other tiered systems of support.
- Direct the Department of Education to release guidance for schools and districts about how to utilize specialized instructional support personnel to help support the needs of all students, improve school climate, and improve school and student success.
- Promote efforts to improve intra-agency collaboration that facilitates systemic collaboration at the state and local level.
- Advance efforts that facilitate the education of the whole child.
- Promote legislation/regulation that improves access to comprehensive and high quality literacy and mathematics instruction.
- Ensure that school psychologists and other specialized instructional support personnel are explicitly mentioned in legislation and other specific grant programs intended to address literacy, social–emotional learning, school climate, and other factors that promote student learning.
- Maintain funding for the Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the National Center for Systemic Improvement to facilitate the implementation and scaling up of evidence-based efforts to improve comprehensive service delivery, student learning, and student well-being.
- Advance efforts to create an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel within the Department of Education to facilitate coordinated and integrated service delivery for all students in schools and local education agencies.

Supporting Legislation

Reducing Barriers to Learning Act. This legislation would establish an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel and create a grant program for state education agencies to build the capacity of local education agencies to develop programs and train personnel dedicated to removing barriers to learning.

ENSURE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS ARE SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR ALL STUDENTS: KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Advance legislation that extends existing antidiscrimination and harassment protections to explicitly include real or perceived gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- Reject efforts to rescind protections offered to transgender students under Title IX, as articulated in the guidance released by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in May 2016.
- Maintain funding for SAMHSA to convene the National LGBTQI+2S Workgroup.
- Continue the existing efforts of the Department of Education and other relevant agencies to designate resources to help implement evidence-based school-wide policies and practices that reduce bullying, harassment, violence, and discrimination for all students.
- Reject efforts to abolish Gun Free School Zones.
- Reject legislation that seeks to allow anyone other than a commissioned personnel or SROs primarily as a substitute for effective discipline policies.
- Continue the existing efforts of the Department of Education and other relevant agencies to designate resources to help implement evidence-based school-wide policies and practices that reduce bullying, harassment, violence, and discrimination for all students.
- Maintain funding for the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, operated by the National Institutes of Justice.

Supporting Legislation

Safe Schools Improvement Act. The Safe Schools Improvement Act would require all schools receiving federal funds authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to adopt codes of conduct specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment, including on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion. SSIA would also require that states report data on bullying and harassment to the Department of Education.

Student Nondiscrimination Act. The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) prohibits public schools from discriminating against any student on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, SNDA prohibits discrimination against any student because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of a person with whom a student associates or has associated.

Promote Evidence-Based Comprehensive School Safety and Crisis Response Efforts

- Employ effective, positive school discipline within federal and state policies that: (a) functions in concert with efforts to address school safety and climate; (b) is not simply punitive (e.g., zero tolerance); (c) is clear, consistent, and equitable; and (d) reinforces positive behaviors. Using security personnel or SROs primarily as a substitute for effective discipline policies does not contribute to school safety and can perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Allow for blended, flexible use of funding streams in education and mental health services at the federal, state, and local level to support effective school safety.
- School safety strategies must balance physical and psychological safety measures. Reasonable physical security such as locked doors, lighted hallways, and visitor check-in systems must be combined with efforts to promote a positive school climate and trust among staff, students, and families where students feel connected and part of a close-knit and caring community, and in which they feel empowered to report any safety concerns.
- Require a comprehensive, whole-school approach to effective school safety through integration of school climate, effective discipline, social–emotional learning, positive behavior, mental health, and academics through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and problem-solving model.
- Include school mental health services as an essential component of creating and sustaining safe schools. This includes social–emotional learning, mental wellness, resilience, and positive connections between students and adults to create a school culture in which students feel safe and empowered to report safety concerns, which is proven to be among the most effective school safety strategies.
- Create frameworks that require school safety plans be consistently reviewed and practiced. Training, planning, and professional development should encompass ongoing prevention and early intervention efforts as well as response and recovery plans in the event the unpreventable occurs.
- Maintain funding for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments.

Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

- Ensure Congress fulfills their promise to provide 40% of the additional costs needed to meet federal mandates required by IDEA.
- Ensure Congress and the Department of Education hold states and districts accountable for ensuring all students are held to high standards as articulated in ESSA and IDEA.
- Maintain the disaggregated data reporting requirement mandated within NCLB and continued in ESSA that ensures schools are meeting the academic, emotional, and behavioral needs of all student subgroups.
- Support initiatives that seek to engage parents and community members to develop meaningful, ambitious, and comparable indicators to measure the progress of students with disabilities.
- Include instances of inclusion and restraint in federal discipline data collection and reports.
- Recognizing the continuum of necessary supports for those students with the most severe disabilities to those with more frequent and everyday needs (e.g., ADHD), seek to secure federal funding that should match the level of student need specifically for research-based intervention.
- Ensure that any legislation/regulation intended to improve student outcomes promotes the use of evidence-based methods for the early identification of students with disabilities, including response to intervention, while discouraging and/or not allowing methods that may produce biases or inaccurate results (e.g., cognitive–achievement discrepancy).
- Support increased investment in early intervention and prevention programming (e.g., MTSS, PBIS) that will reduce the number of students identified with disabilities, thus saving later resources.

Supporting Legislation

IDEA Full Funding Act. This legislation would provide funding that fulfills Congress’ promise to provide 40% of the additional funds needed to meet the mandates under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
NASP Releases 2017 Policy and Legislative Platform

By Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recently released its 2017 Public Policy and Legislative Platform (http://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy). NASP is committed to ensuring that all students—whatever their race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender (including identification and expression), sexual orientation, disability status, language proficiency, or immigration status—receive a high-quality public education in a positive, safe, supportive, and inclusive educational environment that is free of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence and promotes student learning. The 2017–2018 Public Policy and Legislative Platform represents overarching policy goals and recommendations that support the mission and vision of NASP and promote the guiding principles articulated in NASP position statements and other policy statements of the association. This document, which will be updated if the association adopts new policy positions, is specific to federal policy issues; however, state school psychology associations are encouraged to adapt these goals to fit the specific advocacy and policy goals of their states and local districts.

The goal of promoting social justice and promoting equity in all aspects of education is infused throughout NASP’s policy platform, with a specific focus on six major areas:

- Addressing shortages in school psychology
- Increasing access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services
- Promoting comprehensive learning supports within an integrated service delivery system
- Ensuring safe and supportive school environments for all students
- Promoting evidence-based comprehensive school safety and crisis response efforts
- Improving outcomes for students with disabilities

A brief summary of each area is provided below, but you are encouraged to read the document in full (see page 24 in this issue of Communique) and consult additional NASP resources for more information on each specific area.

ADDRESSING SHORTAGES IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Shortages in school psychology have the potential to significantly undermine the availability of high quality and comprehensive school psychological services to schools, families, and students. NASP recently released a resource guide to help states and districts address shortages in their local communities (available at http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-psychology/shortages-in-school-psychology-resource-guide). In addition to the great suggestions contained in this guide, there are several policy solutions that could help remedy the shortage of school psychologists. Two such examples are:

- Encourage Congress, the Department of Education, and relevant credentialing bodies to create pathways to grant credentialing reciprocity for school psychologists across state lines, such as through the Nationally Certified School Psychologist certificate, to help remedy the shortages in rural and other underserved areas.
- Create federal grant programs that will increase the capacity of low-income rural or urban schools to train, recruit, employ, and retain student support personnel like school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors, who provide direct services to students to help them overcome these barriers to learning and achieve academically.

INCREASING ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A key focus of the association is not only increasing access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services, but also advancing the role of school psychologists in providing these services. Unlike community employed professionals providing services in schools, school psychologists are uniquely trained to provide mental and behavioral health services within the context of learning. NASP is working to expand professional development and other resources to help school psychologists improve their capacity to provide these services and will be working to advance policies that support this effort, including:

- Securing adequate funding for the Every Student Succeeds Act and other federal funding streams that can help states and districts implement school mental and behavioral health services.
- Ensure school psychologists are properly recognized as qualified providers of mental and behavioral health services in statute, regulation, and credentialing policy at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Advance legislation that helps reduce disparities in mental health service delivery, especially among underserved populations.
- Protecting Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program to ensure that low-income children have access to comprehensive healthcare that includes mental and behavioral health.

PROMOTING COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SUPPORTS WITHIN AN INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

All students should have access to the wide variety of academic, social–emotional, and mental and behavioral health supports they need in order to be successful. These services are most effective when they are provided within an integrated, multitiered service delivery system that addresses the needs of the local school community. School psychologists can and should be integral players in the design and implementation of these systems, and NASP will be promoting several policies that will help schools and districts implement effective service delivery models including:

- Maintain regulatory language in relevant education legislation that allows federal funds to be used to implement MTSS and other tiered systems of support.
- Ensure that school psychologists and other specialized instructional support personnel are explicitly mentioned in legislation and other specific grant programs intended to address literacy, social–emotional learning, school climate, and other factors that promote student learning.

ENSURING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students learn best when they are in an environment that is safe, supportive, and free of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Unfortunately, this is not the reality for many of our nation’s students. Recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016) indicate that more than 1 in 5 students report being bullied. For LGBTQ youth and students with disabilities, these numbers are much greater. According to GLSEN’s most recent National School Climate Survey, 85% of LGBTQ youth report being verbally harassed or threatened at school (GLSEN, 2016) and students with disabilities are 2–3 times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers. NASP will be working to ensure that all students attend safe and supportive school environments by advocating for the following policies:

- Advance legislation that extends existing antidiscrimination and harassment protections to explicitly include real or perceived gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation and reject efforts to rescind protections offered to transgender students under Title IX, as articulated in the guidance released by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in May 2016.
- Oppose efforts that seek to systematically discriminate against children or youth on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identification, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, language proficiency, or immigration status.
- Promote continuance of the existing efforts of the Department of Education and other relevant agencies to designate resources to help implement evidence-based school-wide policies and practices that reduce bullying, harassment, violence, and discrimination for all students.

PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS RESPONSE EFFORTS

Genuine school safety efforts must balance both physical and psychological safety. To truly improve school safety, reasonable physical security such as...
As is the case with any change in national administration, there is a flurry of 2017 policy platform. For example, President Trump has promised to repeal the Gun Free Schools Act, an idea that Mrs. DeVos stated she would support. Legislation has been introduced that would essentially get rid of Gun Free School Zones, and it is possible that President Trump will issue an executive order related to this issue in the near future. NASP opposes these efforts and any other efforts to increase the presence of weapons on school grounds by anyone other than a commissioned school resource officer. Legislation that seeks to abolish the Department of Education has also been introduced. Although it is very unlikely that this legislation will progress very far, it is an indication of potential conversations regarding the level of funding the department will receive in order to support (or hamper) its ability to carry out its mission and facilitate the sharing of best practices. Finally, efforts to fully repeal the ESSA accountability regulations are underway. Although the regulations essentially reiterated what is already required by law, they did provide additional guidance regarding certain accountability indicators and gave states an additional year to identify schools in need of improvement. It is unclear what a full repeal of these regulations would mean for states, and NASP will be sure to update you via our Policy Matters blog and other member communications as we learn more.

Requiring a comprehensive, whole-school approach to effective school safety through integration of school climate, effective discipline, social–emotional learning, positive behavior, mental health, and academics through a multitiered system of supports and problem-solving models.

Including school mental health services as an essential component of creating and sustaining safe schools. This includes social–emotional learning, mental wellness, resilience, and positive connections between students and adults in order to create a school culture in which students feel safe and empowered to report safety concerns, which is proven to be among the most effective school safety strategies.

Creating frameworks that require that school safety plans be consistently reviewed and practiced. Training, planning, and professional development should encompass ongoing prevention and early intervention efforts as well as response and recovery plans in the event the unpreventable occurs.

WHAT THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION COULD MEAN FOR NASP’S ADVOCACY PLATFORM

As is the case with any change in national administration, there is a flurry of policy proposals and discussions occurring that could impact schools and the students we serve. At this time this article went to press, there are several ideas being discussed that conflict with the mission and vision of NASP, as well as our 2017 policy platform. For example, President Trump has promised to repeal the Gun Free Schools Act, an idea that Mrs. DeVos stated she would support. Legislation has been introduced that would essentially get rid of Gun Free School Zones, and it is possible that President Trump will issue an executive order related to this issue in the near future. NASP opposes these efforts and any other effort to increase the presence of weapons on school grounds by anyone other than a commissioned school resource officer. Legislation that seeks to abolish the Department of Education has also been introduced. Although it is very unlikely that this legislation will progress very far, it is an indication of potential conversations regarding the level of funding the department will receive in order to support (or hamper) its ability to carry out its mission and facilitate the sharing of best practices. Finally, efforts to fully repeal the ESSA accountability regulations are underway. Although the regulations essentially reiterated what is already required by law, they did provide additional guidance regarding certain accountability indicators and gave states an additional year to identify schools in need of improvement. It is unclear what a full repeal of these regulations would mean for states, and NASP will be sure to update you via our Policy Matters blog and other member communications as we learn more.

Nelson De Velos was recently confirmed as the next Secretary of Education. Her confirmation process, and public education in general, has been a national topic of conversation for the last several weeks; the idea of proficiency vs. growth even made an appearance in a recent episode of Saturday Night Live. NASP did not formally oppose or support her nomination, but rather, shared some concerns raised by her answers during her confirmation hearing (the full statement is available at http://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-matters/what-the-trump-administration-could-mean-for-public-education). These concerns still exist, and NASP will be as engaged as possible with Secretary DeVos and members of Congress to ensure that we have a public education system that educates all children and ensures access to the services and supports they need to be successful. Over the past several weeks, numerous policy conversations have focused on the idea of private school choice and private school vouchers, which Mrs. DeVos has long championed. President Trump, during his campaign, proposed a $20 billion school choice/voucher program. More concrete details, including how it will be paid for, are expected to be released in the near future.

At this time, NASP does not have a formal position on specific school choice or private school voucher options, but encourages school psychologists to be informed about these policies and how they impact students, especially students with disabilities. In many cases, students with disabilities who accept vouchers to attend private school are generally required under state law to waive the specific protections they would have under IDEA if they were enrolled in public school, which is potentially problematic. To help school psychologists understand more about the issue of private school vouchers, the NASP Government and Professional Relations Committee is developing a fact sheet that summarizes existing research relevant to these programs and student outcomes. It will be shared as soon as it is finalized.

NASP is dedicated to advancing policy and practice that ensures that all children thrive at school, at home, and throughout life. It is vitally important that school psychologists stay informed and engaged to ensure that we maintain a public education system that benefits all children and improves school and student outcomes. NASP will continue to provide you with relevant information on these important policy issues as they unfold over the next several months. Please contact Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach, PhD, NASP Director of Government Relations (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org) with specific questions.
What are your areas of expertise at this point in your career? At this point in my career, I would identify consultation as an area of expertise in teaching and practice. In the consultation courses that I teach, I emphasize the importance of developing a strong consultation skill set that can be incorporated across all areas of the work that we engage in within the field of school psychology. It is my belief that having the ability to collaborate with others to work toward change is not only useful for a consultation referral, but is also vital to assessment and the provision of therapy to school-age individuals. My approach in practice is much the same: I acknowledge and respect that working with students means that I must engage not only the student but also the families, school staff, and community members.

Research design and program evaluation is another area of interest of mine. As a part of my graduate training, I completed a specialization in research design and methodology and worked as a research assistant performing statistical analysis for several projects. I am currently working to develop research projects that seek to inform practice related to consultation and crisis intervention.

Describe something that has surprised you about your career thus far. The most significant challenge that I have faced during my career has been realizing the broad range of opportunities that are available to me professionally. It’s something that you hear others mention as you’re completing your graduate training, but it doesn’t quite become apparent until you enter into the workforce. As I previously mentioned, I work full-time as a school psychologist with an adjunct faculty appointment in a school psychology program. The flexibility and variety of career opportunities within our field is something that I value because it allows for changes given my current professional goals and interests.

What challenges have you faced in your early career, and how have you handled them? The most significant challenge that I think many face in our field is work–life balance. In my current role in HISD as a member of the crisis team, I provide services in response to situations that may result in strong personal emotional reactions postintervention. Realigning that my level of effectiveness is impacted when I do not devote time to my self-care, this year I have committed to engaging in activities that I enjoy (e.g., running, strength training, or other workouts) on a daily basis. Even though this may require that I wake up at 4:30 a.m. for a group run with my local running group, I continue to do so. In this short time working in the field, I have realized how impactful self-care is to my role as a practitioner and trainer, and also in my personal life with friends and family. At this point, I don’t know that I could sleep in and miss a morning workout—it’s just a good as my morning cup of coffee.

What advice do you have for other early career school psychologists? I would encourage other ECSPs to identify and maintain mentoring and collaborative professional relationships. My work so far in the field has been easier to navigate due to my strong professional network. I not only have mentors in the field but I also engage in mentoring others in an effort to continue the cycle of working together to advance our profession. Another piece of advice would be to continue to seek out professional development opportunities that are meaningful to your practice. We are lifelong learners! Challenge yourself to engage in conversations and discussions with others who may have differing views, beliefs, or backgrounds. Our work affords us with the opportunity to work with and serve diverse populations, which I feel is a wonderful part of our job, but this requires that we commit to being lifelong learners in terms of developing cultural sensitivity and awareness.

How has your NASP membership benefitted you? Being a member of NASP has benefitted me in all of the areas addressed in the previous questions. This year I have greatly benefitted from the NASP Early Career Professionals online community, as this resource provides a space for questions related to challenges that arise throughout practice and is a method for connecting professionals across the country. Reading the posts of other professionals has helped me in that I now know that many of the challenges that I have encountered in the first 2 years of my career are similar to those of many other ECSPs. At times, it feels that you may be working through a work-related challenge on your own, but NASP membership has opened my eyes to the various support networks within the organization.

In addition, I am thankful to be a member of an organization that truly values the voices of its members. The NASP leadership has shown its investment in addressing areas or topics that are important to the members, which can be seen through the key initiatives that address areas such as the provision of mental health services in schools and the recruitment and retention of school psychologists to address the shortage of practitioners. I encourage all early career professionals to get actively involved in NASP to truly benefit from the wealth of resources and networks that are available! Membership also provides the opportunity to engage in discussions on issues and policies that impact our profession.
Rights Without Labels

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

about the practice of classifying children in order to facilitate the provision of services, with the first committee to address these concerns convening in 1972 (Delegate Assembly Minutes, 1972, as cited in Cobb, 1990). The following year, NASP’s president, Calvin Catterall, directed a memo to the Delegate Assembly outlining the need to provide services to students regardless of whether their placement was in general education or special education (Catterall, 1973; Cobb, 1990). Additionally, throughout the 1970s, questions related to bias and the appropriateness of assessments and placement for ethnic minority groups were raised, with a 1976 NASP survey revealing that the issue of unbiased assessment was the highest social priority among practitioners (Delegate Assembly Minutes, 1976, as cited in Cobb, 1990).

In 1984, NASP members created the Educational Service Delivery Task Force to address existing “dysfunctional service delivery systems” (Cobb, 1990, p. 50). This task force expressed the need to restructure the U.S. educational system to meet the needs of all students without stigmatizing and denigrating them through the use of labels, and to address dysfunctional aspects of assessment in order to protect the rights of students (Cobb, 1990). The following year, the NASP position statement Advocacy for Appropriate Educational Services for All Children (NASP, 1985) acknowledged that it is not benign to label children who are low achievers with a disability even with the purpose of providing services that would not be accessible in the general education setting. This paper further acknowledges that educators often label students as disabled as a means to access needed services for children because of a flawed system that attaches funding to labels. Furthermore, Advocacy for Appropriate Educational Services for All Children denounced the (then) current special education classification system for being deficit-based and arbitrary, especially for students with mild intellectual disabilities. It also acknowledged that the act of labeling reifies these categories and prevents educators from understanding a student’s psychoeducational needs while lowering expectations for students who are placed in special education. Furthermore, Advocacy for Appropriate Educational Services for All Children called for the provision of education within the general education setting, thereby eliminating the need to classify students.

Now that we have briefly examined the history of Rights Without Labels, it is time to see how we have fared. Have we abandoned the potentially harmful practice of labeling students in order to provide services? Are we using instructionally relevant categories and assessment methods? Has classification reliability improved? Are we providing services in an inclusive environment?

LABELING

According to the latest NASP survey of school psychologists, the average practitioner is still spending roughly half (47%) of her time engaged in special education evaluations, which is far greater than any other activity (the runner up was promoting interventions at 23%; Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2012). What’s more, the rate of students with exceptionalities has risen from 11% in 1990–1991 to 13% in 2012–2013, with 35% of these students classified as having a specific learning disability (NCES, 2015). This trend is important because, for years, research has shown the negative impact that labeling can have. For instance, Jones (1972) found that students with mild intellectual disabilities felt ashamed of special education placement, and were teased and therefore lied to their peers about their class placement. In 1977, Gilling and Rucker’s research found that teachers perceived students with labels as having more significant behavioral or academic problems that require more intensive services than similar children who did not have a formal exceptionality. More recently, a longitudinal study of 41 individuals with specific learning disabilities spanning 20 years determined that “the stigmatization and abuse received by this group far exceeds the severity of their difficulties” (Higgins, Raskind, Goldberg, & Herman, 2002, p. 16).

INSTRUCTIONAL RELEVANCE

While Rights Without Labels does not explicitly state what is meant by instructionally irrelevant classification, it is not hard to guess in regard to at least one exceptionality. When it comes to determining specific learning disorders, models that rely on tests of IQ have little to no instructional relevance because tests of cognitive ability supply little information applicable to intervention creation (Gresham & Witt, 1997; MacMillan, Gresham, & Bocian, 1998; Siegel, 1988). So how have we made out in this regard? Have we abandoned the use of IQ tests for assessments that actually have relevance (i.e., assessments of academics; Burns et al., 2015)? While as much as 66% of schools report using multitiered systems of supports (MTSS) as part of their approach to the identification of specific learning disability (SLD; K12/CASE, 2011 as cited in Cortiella & Horwitz, 2014), no clear data on the number of students being found eligible for SLD in MTSS settings is available (Cortiella & Horwitz, 2014) and only two states, Delaware and Georgia, exclusively use this model (Zumeta, Zirkel, & Danielson, 2014). Conversely, other state school psychology associations, including Oregon and California, endorse the use of patterns of strengths and weaknesses (PSW). This approach to identifying SLD encourages the abandonment of the full-scale IQ score and the use of patterns of cognitive functioning or “processing” strengths and weakness. However, this approach requires administering more IQ tests than the traditional discrepancy model approach despite research, including a recent meta-analysis, that suggests that measures of cognitive functioning have little to no utility for the creation of academic interventions (Burns et al., 2015).

CLASSIFICATION RELIABILITY

How have we fared in increasing classification reliability? Using the PSW model would appear justified if it led to more reliable and valid labeling. However, while literature on the topic is still in its infancy, an early study has raised questions about the reliability and validity of the PSW approach (Miciak, Fletcher, Stuebing, Vaughn, & Tolar, 2014). The findings of this study are not surprising, as problems with intradividual comparisons have been demonstrated for more than 25 years (e.g., Glutting, McDermott, Watkins, & Rush, 1997; McDermott, Fantuzzo, & Glutting, 1990). Unfortunately for proponents of MTSS, studies examining this method of SLD eligibility determination have not been successful in showing that it is a reliable method of identification either (The Consortium for Evidence-Based Early Intervention Practices, 2010).

REMOVING LABELS

While there is an increasing amount of data available to the public through the U.S. Department of Education, Office Special Education Programs (OSEP), we are unaware of any source that provides statistics on the total number of students exited from special education to general education each year. The closest we could find was partial exit data for students ages 14–21. During the 2013–2014 school year, 10.41% of U.S. students ages 14–21 who were exited from special education did so because they moved back to the general education setting. This is down slightly from 11.9% during the 2001–2002 school year (OSEP, 2016). However, this does not elucidate the issue much because no data are available on the total number of students ages 14–21 enrolled in special education and no data on the total percentage of these students who are exited from students appears to exist. Perhaps even more problematic is the lack of data on recidivism (i.e., those students who enter, exit, and then reenter special education services). Without these data, we have no idea how we have progressed in regard to keeping students from migrating in and out of special education services.

The most recent study on the subject of decategorization of special education eligibility we were able to find was a longitudinal study, funded by OSEP, that examined 11,000 students ages 6 through 12 during the 1999–2000 school year who were receiving special education services. Results of this research found that by spring 2002, only 17% of these students had been decategorized from special education. Additionally, of these students, 42% were declassified from speech or language impairment, 12% other health impairment, 9% from orthopedic impairment, 6% from hearing impairment, 5% from visual impairment. This suggests that not only are very few elementary students declassified, but that those who are exited had exceptionality that school psychologists often do not have much input in determining (SEELS, 2005).

EXCLUSION FROM GENERAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2015) data, there has been significant progress toward providing education in more inclusive environments. Between 1990 and 2013, students with disabilities receiving 80%
or more of their class time in general education classes has increased from 33% to 40%. Students who spend 40% or more of their day in general education settings decreased from 25% to 14%. However, only 16% of students labeled with an intellectual disability who leave special education spend much of their time providing labels that may stigmatize students. On the bright side, there has been an increase in inclusive education for students with exceptionalities.

While we have outlined some national trends, whether or not to celebrate is something each of us must determine on our own. When doing so, we hope you will ask some of the following questions: To what extent has your school/district/state embraced MTSS and abandoned the use of IQ testing for SLD determination? Do you find your evaluations frequently fail to identify students who are low achievers to provide services that are not available in general education? Do you advocate for inclusive education? How often do the multidisciplinary teams remove an unnecessary label? We hope you are happy with your answers.

References
Burns, M. K., Petersen-Brown, S., Haegle, K., Rodriguez, M., Schmitt, B., Coo-
per, M., ... VanDerHeyden, A. M. (2015). Meta-analysis of academic interventions 
derived from neuropsychological data. School Psychology Quarterly, 30(1), 28–42.


Catterall, C. (1973, March). Issues in spe-
cial education and possible directions for NAESP. Memo presented to the Delegate 
Assembly of the National Association of 
School Psychologists.

services for all children: History of an as-
sociation priority. School Psychology Quar-
terly, 5(1), 47–54.

The Consortium for Evidence-Based Early 
Intervention Practices (2016). A response to the Learning Disabilities Association of 
America (LDA) white paper on specific 

Cortella, C., & Horwitz, S. (2014). The 
state of learning disabilities, 3rd edition. 
content/uploads/2014/11/2014-State-of-
LD.pdf


problem and its consequences for inter-

i ty of intelligence tests for treatment 
planning classification and placement decisions: Recent empirical findings and 
futures directions. School Psychology Quar-
terly, 12, 249–267.

Higgins, E., Raskind, M. Goldberg, R., & 
Herman, K. (2002). Stages of accept-
ance of a learning disability: The impact of 

Jones, R. L. (1972). Labels and stigma in 
special education. Exceptional Children, 38(7), 553–564.

MacMillan, D. L., Gresham, F. M., & Bocian, 
K. M. (1998). Discrepancy between defi-
nitions of learning disabilities and school 
practices: An empirical investigation. 

McDermott, P. A., Fantuozo, J. W., & Glut-
ting, J. J. (1990). Just say no to subtest 
analysis: A critique of Wechsler theory 
and practice. Journal of Psychoeducational 
Assessment, 8(3), 290–292.

Micha, I., Fletcher, J. M., Steeleing, K. K., 
of cognitive strengths and weaknesses: 
identification rates, agreement, and valid-
ity for learning disability identification. 

National Association of School Psycholo-
gists/National Coalition of Advocates 
for Students. (1985, April). Advocacy for 
the appropriate educational services for all 
civil rights of all students, including those who are transgender or gender di-
verse: A position statement. Retrieved by 
the Executive Board/Delegate Assem-
blies of the National Association of School Psychologists.

National Association of School Psycholo-
gists. (1986). Rights without labels: A posi-
tion statement. Adopted by the Executive 
Board/Delegate Assembly of the Na-
tional Association of School Psychologists.

National Center for Education Statistics 
(NCES). (2015). The condition of edu-
ed.gov/pubs2015/ocr/ oce

Special Education Elementary Longitudinal 
Study (SEELS). (2005). Description— 
students who leave special education. A 
special topic report from the special edu-
cation elementary longitudinal study. 
Retrieved from http://www.seels.net/design 
docs/SEELS_Decels_Final.pdf

Siegel, L. S. (1988). Evidence that IQ scores 
are irrelevant to the definition and analy-
sis of reading disability. Canadian Journal 
of Psychology, 42, 201–215.

U.S. Department of Education, Office 
of Special Education Programs (OSEP), 
(2014). Individuals with Disabilities 
Education Act (IDEA) database. Retrieved 
from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/ 
osep/idea/data/flat-tables/index .html

Identifying specific learning disability: 
Legislation, regulation, and court deci-
sions. Topics in Language Disorders, 34(1), 
8–24.
Let the BRIEF2 point you in the right direction

BRIEF<sup>®</sup>2
Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function; Second Edition

With the new BRIEF2, updated with normative data from 50 U.S. states, you can TRUST your results: they are backed by more than 1,000 BRIEF peer-reviewed studies in 60 languages across six continents.

The BRIEF2 gives you more informed and pinpointed profiles and empowers you to implement even more effective interventions.

Pricing is only $359 for a Parent/Teacher/Self-Report Hand-Scored kit and $275 for a Parent/Teacher Hand-Scored kit.

Visit [www.parinc.com](http://www.parinc.com) or call 1.800.331.8378 to order your BRIEF2 kit today!
Motivational Issues

[continued from page 1]

respect, partnership, autonomy, and compassion. Miller and Rollnick are clear that the specific strategies of MI only work in the context of this set of attitudes and beliefs. The strategies of MI are guided by the goal of eliciting what is referred to by the authors as “change talk.” Change talk refers to client or consultant responses in favor of change, including reasons that change might be good, disadvantages of not changing, optimism about being able to change, desire for change, and commitment to change. MI is based on the premise that behavior change is much more likely to occur when a consultant acknowledges a client’s inherent autonomy to decide what to change and how to change it. The goal of MI, then, is to evoke change talk to help people become more ready, willing, and able to change. Although people are motivated, as evidenced by clear and strong change talk, they are much more likely to be receptive to developing a plan to create change, and they are much more willing to be responsive to feedback provided by an expert consultant (Herman, Reineke, Frey, & Shepard, 2013; Lee, Frey, Herman, & Reineke, 2014; Reineke, Herman, & Sprick, 2011).

Originally developed to address motivational issues in addiction treatment, MI has now been applied in nearly every clinical service setting where adherence to recommendations regarding treatment or consultation is critical. These settings include but are not limited to health care, corrections, dentistry, mental health counseling, and family therapy. More than 200 randomized trials have evaluated the effects of MI in a variety of contexts, with the vast majority indicating improved outcomes when MI is used either as a stand-alone intervention or when combined with other interventions (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). In one of the most novel applications to date, Thevos, Quick, and Yanduli (2000) found that MI increased water purification practices in African villages where an MI approach was used as compared to the standard and traditional approach of advising and educating. This study compared adherence to techniques designed to improve water quality and decrease disease associated with poor water quality. Study findings suggest that adherence to techniques on which communities were educated was significantly greater when an additional MI component was included in the intervention.

In recent years, researchers and practitioners have continued to generalize MI beyond addiction by applying the core principles of MI in school settings to address common motivational issues that undermine school-based consultation and interventions (Lee et al., 2014). These efforts have resulted in several programs targeting motivational challenges in schools based on the guiding principles of MI. The Family Check-Up (FCU) was originally designed to be part of a multitiered family support service for schools that included a family resource room, access to specialists, and the FCU for families that required more intensive services. The original FCU consists of three family sessions, preferably in the family home: an interview, an ecological assessment including video assessments of family interactions, and a feedback session. The sessions are all conducted using the MI counseling style and assessments are designed to tap key malleable aspects of the family environment related to youth development (e.g., parenting practices, family communication). The goals of the meetings are to evoke parent engagement through the MI approach and tailored feedback, and to help parents develop a plan of action to remedy any identified concerns. Several well-designed studies have supported the effects of the FCU on improving student/child outcomes across a variety of ages (Gill, Hyde, Shaw, Dishion, & Wilson, 2008; Shaw, Dishion, Supplee, Gardner, & Arns, 2006; Slavet et al., 2005).

Building from the strong foundation established by the FCU, several research teams have been working to apply MI principles and strategies to the full range of consultation issues that occur in schools. Reineke et al. (2011) developed the Classroom Check-Up (CCU), an MI-based teacher consultation model. The CCU includes three consultation visits, an initial feedback session, and several structured classroom observation visits. The purpose of the observations is to gather ecological assessment data that will guide the feedback session and address critical leverage points that promote effective instruction and classroom management (e.g., expectations, opportunities for students to respond, praise-reprimand ratios).

Frey, Walker, et al. (2013) attempted to use elements of both the FCU and the CCU in their efforts to create Tertiary First Step to Success, a modified version of the well-established intervention First Step to Success (Walker et al., 1998). First Step is a secondary prevention strategy that includes a classroom and a home component. It is designed for students showing early aggressive, disruptive classroom behaviors. The intervention consists of three modular components designed to work together, though each can be implemented as a stand-alone procedure. These are (a) universal screening and identification, (b) a school component, and (c) a home component. The intervention is designed to improve social competency and academic functioning of young children (kindergarten through fourth grade) who are at risk for problem behavior. This modification found that the First Step has shown lasting benefits for students exposed to the intervention, poor student outcomes were associated with low teacher or parent compliance with the intervention.

While the First Step intervention was found to be effective for most students, clinical trials yielded three limitations within the First Step literature base. First, students with severely disordered functioning displayed highly variable and sometimes unsatisfactory responses to the First Step program. Second, the intervention focused on behavior were consistently smaller in the home when compared to those evident in the school setting. Third, treatment effects appeared to lack durability, suggesting that the intervention was difficult to maintain. These limitations may be associated with the apparently limited effectiveness of the original home module of First Step. The home module may not have been able to get parents to engage and alter their motivation, effectiveness, and competency or perceived competence. These limitations suggest that the long-term effects on parent factors resulted in blunted positive impact on children’s behaviors in the home environment. Reassuringly, that an MI framework could help address these types of problems, Frey and colleagues developed a new home module that more effectively influences parenting practices, Tertiary homeBase (Frey et al., 2015; Walker & Gresham, 2013).

Tertiary homeBase differs from the original home module because: (a) content is individualized for each family; (b) MI strategies designed to evoke change talk change talk such as open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries, are infused into the intervention procedures; and (c) the coach’s use of MI skills is a critical feature of implementation fidelity (the extent to which to which families receive the intervention). Based on a culturally responsive framework, Double Check includes a professional development element followed by ongoing coaching. The coaching model is based on a modified version of the Classroom Check-Up and employs an MI approach. A pilot project using this modification found that teachers exposed to the coaching model were more likely to report culturally responsive beliefs (Bottani et al., 2012; Hershfeldt et

When people are motivated, as evidenced by clear and strong change talk, they are much more likely to be receptive to developing a plan to create change, and they are much more willing to be responsive to feedback provided by an expert consultant.

Wesley A. Sims, PhD, NCSP, is a clinical assistant professor with the Alabama positive behavior support office at the University of Alabama. Daniel R. Coker, MPH, is a doctoral candidate in school psychology at the University of Missouri and an intern at the Boone County Schools Mental Health Coalition. Keith Herman, PhD, is a professor in the department of school, education, and counseling psychology at the University of Missouri.

VERIFIED

© 2017, National Association of School Psychologists
(2013) developed the Everyday Conversations About Change (ECAC) approach. To address the idea that each conversation within a consultation interaction represents an opportunity to foster the motivation to change, Herman et al., is fully engaged and ready to change; however, if the person is ambivalent about changing, as the case may be, the use of directive language may not be helpful. Additionally, once a treatment plan has been adopted, those responsible for implementation may have difficulty changing their behavioral repertoire to successfully implement the agreed upon plan. In these cases, consultants and collaborators face the daunting task of increasing the fidelity of implementation, or encouraging the person to increase motivation to change practices. To address the idea that each conversation within a consultation interaction represents an opportunity to foster the motivation to change, Herman et al., (2013) developed the Everyday Conversations About Change (ECAC) approach. The ECAC approach suggests that every interaction matters. Even in 5-min- ute interactions, spending time engaging the person in a supportive manner (e.g., reflective listening, affirming), assessing the person’s readiness, evoking change talk, and then planning next steps will increase the likelihood of the person moving closer to change.

MI and implementation fidelity. Implementation fidelity is an important out- come associated with MI and is recognized as a significant confounding factor in determining the effects of intervention. Challenges in motivating teachers and parents to adhere to a treatment plan or intervention represent a significant issue for school-based intervention efforts. If critical intervention components are not implemented with fidelity, an otherwise effective treatment may have no clinical impact. Examples of interventions that have been supplemented with MI-informed coaching procedures include Coping Power (Herman et al., 2012), the Promoting alternative thinking skills (Reinke et al., 2012), and First Step to Success (Frey et al., Walker, et al., 2013).

MI capacity-building. The potential benefits of applying the guiding prin- ciples of MI within the educational setting are considerable. However, the MI approach is relatively new to schools. An obvious challenge for the use of MI in schools is how best to disseminate the MI approach to educators and ensure faithful implementation. Frey, Lee, et al. (2013) developed The Motivational Interviewing Navigation Guide (MING) to enhance teachers’ motivation to adopt and implement school-based interventions. MING is a training framework or toolkit for developing and assessing MI-related skills for teachers and educational service providers. Although many MI fidelity assessments have been developed in other settings, their use in schools is limited by the unique aspects of educational settings. For example, MI assessments were originally developed based on the traditional one-on-one coaching model with planned 30-minute sessions. In school consultation, 50-minute meetings are rarely feasible, and collaboration is typically limited to brief interactions.

Frey et al. (2014) developed the School-Based Motivational Interviewing Training and Support (SB-MITS) module to promote MI skills for specialized school instructional support staff (Lee et al., 2014). The SB-MITS includes 5-hour training, four and individualized coaching sessions during which the participant receives performance feedback on a recorded interaction with a teacher or parent. These modules facilitate initial skill development through se- quenced exposure to core MI concepts and skills introduced via didactic train- ing, role-play, and reflection. During individualized feedback sessions, trainers encourage proficient MI use through individualized, iterative coaching sessions guided by recorded encounters collected by the attendee in authentic school- based settings. Preliminary tests of the SB-MITS with 12 coaches in an early childhood setting yielded results suggesting that the module improves motivational interviewing knowledge and skills in school-based professionals (Frey et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2014). Additionally, participants reported high levels of satisfaction for the individual workshops and for the module overall.

**FINAL THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

An MI approach has been successfully employed in a variety of settings to foster positive change in problematic behavior. The use of an interpersonal approach based on respect, partnership, autonomy, and compassion, and a reliance on open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries to evoke change talk and behavior change are foundations of an MI approach. Early application of MI in relation to prevention and intervention of school-based behavior prob- lems has yielded promising findings. Thus far, it appears that an MI approach is likely to complement and improve any school-based consultation service where compliance or motivation is a concern. Change is at the core of most activities in educational settings. As agents of change in schools, educational profession- als, including school psychologists, can develop and apply MI to their work to increase motivation in those with whom they want to evoke change and growth. While there have been advances in the study of MI in schools, additional work is needed to establish this approach as a core component of effective school- based practice.

**References**


IMPROVE THEIR LITERACY SKILLS

NEW EDITION

UNDERSTANDING, ASSESSING, AND INTERVENING ON
READING PROBLEMS
SECOND EDITION
LAWERICE M. JOSEPH, PHD

Revised content and new chapters help practitioners:

- Implement interventions for word-level reading, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.
- Address new common core literacy standards.
- Uniquely support English language learners.
- Understand how language development influences reading ability.

View a sample online for a look inside this new resource!

Order your copy at www.nasponline.org/publications
Student Connections

The Cuban Education System: International Trip Insights

By Heather Schmitt

Until recently, setting foot in Cuba as an American citizen was a heavily restricted experience. Moreover, getting an “insider” glimpse at the Cuban education system is something few have had the chance to do. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to study abroad in Cuba as a school psychology graduate student at Michigan State University. My 2-week trip to Cuba provided rich learning opportunities through interactions with policy makers, program directors, university faculty, teachers, and students.

Importance of Culturally Responsive Practice

One foundation for service delivery within Domain 8 of NASP’s Practice Model is an understanding and respect for diversity (Skalski et al., 2015). This facet of practice is important for school psychologists, whether in training or as veteran practitioners. The United States is home to an increasing number of immigrant families: As of 2013, this number was 13% of the population, 3% of whom are Cuban (Rusin, Zong, & Baralova, 2015; Zong & Batalova, 2015). This further translates into nearly 2.1 million school-age immigrant children (Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, 2015). By understanding educational systems and their contexts in other countries (i.e., enhanced multicultural awareness), school psychologists can better serve international students and families. Moreover, the ability to reexamine one’s personal world view across domains (including nationality) is important for school psychologists. In the case of Cuban heritage, this involves challenging preconceived notions developed due to limited exposure to Cuba’s culture. By the conclusion of my time abroad, I had developed an enhanced understanding of Cuban education as it relates to curriculum, student evaluation, and service delivery.

Curriculum

Throughout all levels of education in Cuba, there is a common national curriculum. Primary school students take nine subjects, including civic education (e.g., national symbols, manners). Students ages 13 to 15 attend secondary school and take 12 subjects, including technical drawing and chemistry. Students ages 16 to 18 attend pre-university, taking special preparation classes for university in their final year. Children in nursery through 12th grade all receive sex education, including topics like birth control methods and gender identity. Cuba’s dedication to a broad and balanced curriculum aligns with aspects of NASP’s Leveraging Essential School Practices, ESSA, MTSS, and the NASP Practice Model: A Crosswalk to Help Every School and Student Succeed (Vaillancourt Strobach & Cowan, 2016). One essential practice discussed within this document is providing all students with access to a rigorous, comprehensive curriculum. From what we observed, these values are shared in Cuba. Additionally, Cuba’s common national curriculum parallels more recent U.S. initiatives that emphasize consistent learning goals, such as Common Core State Standards.

There are several important dimensions of Cuban education that supplement the curriculum. For instance, parent involvement is a key feature throughout schooling. Parents meet with primary school teachers two Saturdays per month to discuss student progress. While U.S. parent–teacher conferences work to build this avenue of communication, Cuban parents view these frequent meetings as mandatory. Another feature of education in Cuba is “classroom monitors” or “tutoring in advance” that children in each subject. These students are typically the strongest in the subject, and they are responsible for things like tutoring struggling peers or teaching a lesson if the teacher is absent. In this way, Cubans view peer support as a fundamental approach to helping students progress through the curriculum. This practice, though more standardized, reminded me of U.S. instructional practices like peer-assisted learning strategies.

Student Evaluation

Student evaluation is critical in Cuba. Students must pass monthly exams to demonstrate knowledge acquisition, and grades are posted publicly. In addition, students must pass an end-of-year exam to advance to the next grade level. At the pre-university level, students take identical exams across the country in math, history, and Spanish; for students interested in specialized fields (e.g., art history), additional aptitude tests are required. Students are then ranked by their scores. In their final year of pre-university, students create a list of their top career choices and select university studies in order of rank; for example, the first-ranked student declares field of study, followed by the second-ranked student, and so forth. The Ministry of Education of Cuba determines the number of students allowed to pursue each career field. This number is based on how many jobs the government predetermines will be needed for each field in 5 years. When they complete their university studies, students are guaranteed a job in their field as required service to the government (which pays all education expenses).

When discussing this system with the Cubans, they emphasized the high-stakes nature of exams. Even Cuba’s music and arts schools rigorously evaluate young students; those deemed to have aptitude in the arts can then attend the specialized schools at age 6 (with required arts exams to advance at all levels). It proved interesting to reflect on how education stakeholders in the United States might share experiences with their Cuban peers, given increases in standardized testing and accountability. For example, students in Cuba and the United States may have similar anxieties with end-of-year exams. It did not appear that test scores had major implications for educators in Cuba; however, teacher evaluations in the United States can be partially based on student improvement. While U.S. arts education tends to take a hit during budget cuts or times of renewed academic focus, Cuban education is very entwined with its music and arts culture.

Service Delivery

While there is significant literature on Cuba’s education system, much of it does not address special education. During our time in Cuba, we talked with professionals about what services for students with special needs typically looks like. These students are often enrolled in special education schools. Separate facilities are viewed as best suited to meet the needs of these students, helping them learn and function at their optimal level. As a special education director in Cuba described, Cuba’s official position is that special education institutions are the best way to attend to the culture of diversity, as opposed to denying it (Gasperini, 2000). While the United States provides some center-based programming for students with disabilities, the growing consensus and trend toward integration within regular schools contrasts with Cuba’s approach.

Additional service delivery in Cuba often takes the form of community projects that aim to meet the needs of students beyond the school setting. For example, we visited a program that provides students with developmental disabilities lessons in arts and life skills (e.g., cooking), with the goal of teaching them to function semi-independently as part of society. We also visited a program that helps students with disabilities learn everything from reading to typing. There is a significant focus on helping students prepare for the workforce, with workshops to children after school and all day throughout the summers. Workshop projects are student-driven and include things like dance, magazine production, and neighborhood history.

Conclusion

With just 2 weeks to spend in Cuba, my experiences only scratched the surface of its education landscape. However, this unique experience undoubtedly broadened my global perspective and view of education. I discovered more concretely how developing a better understanding of another country’s social and education systems can inform my work as a future school psychologist in the United States. My enhanced cultural competence will continue to influence experiences I seek out and the way in which I engage in culturally competent practice.

References


NASP's Strategic Partnership With the Joint Committee on Standards in Educational Evaluation

By Julie Q. Morrison

The development and dissemination of standards is core to the mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Indeed, a recent search for the term “standards” on NASP’s website yielded 2,910 records. Although most school psychologists think of standards as they pertain to graduate preparation, credentialing, professional ethics, or school psychological services, there is another set of standards in which NASP has a stake. NASP is one of 14 sponsoring organizations of the Joint Committee on Standards in Educational Evaluation. As such, NASP has a seat at the table alongside other prominent organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, the American Evaluation Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. Yet few NASP members have even heard of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee was created in 1975 with the aim of improving the quality of evaluation within the field of education. The collective efforts of the Joint Committee have resulted in the development of three sets of standards: The Personnel Evaluation Standards, The Program Evaluation Standards, and The Classroom Assessment Standards for PreK–12 Teachers (Klinger et al., 2015). The Classroom Assessment Standards effectively replaced the Classroom Assessment Standards for Teachers (Yarbrough et al., 2015), as there are currently underway to revise The Personnel Evaluation Standards, now in its second edition. All three sets of standards were created using a process specified by federal law in the Title I—Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2004. The standard statements for all three sets of standards were approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Standards approved by ANSI become American National Standards. The Program Evaluation Standards are particularly relevant to school psychologists as the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services identifies “Research and Program Evaluation” as one of three foundations of service delivery alongside “Diversity in Development and Learning” and “Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice” (NASP, 2010). School psychologists are advised to apply The Program Evaluation Standards when evaluating programs designed to meet students’ academic or behavioral needs at a school or district level.

In addition to setting standards in educational evaluation, the Joint Committee is involved in reviewing and updating its published standards (every 5 years); training policy makers, evaluators, and educators in the use of the standards; and serving as a clearing house on evaluation standards literature. To learn more about the Joint Committee’s current standards and new developments, NASP members are encouraged to visit the Joint Committee’s website (www.jcsee.org) or contact NASP’s liaison to the Joint Committee, Julie Morrison (Julie.Morrison@uc.edu), who serves on the executive board of the Joint Committee.

References

HELP THEM SUCCEED

FOR EDUCATORS

Improving Children’s Homework, Organization, and Planning Skills (HOPS) Interventions

By Joshua M. Langberg, PhD

A TREATMENT MANUAL

FOR PARENTS

Take the complete approach to educational success. Use this treatment manual and how-to guide for parents to improve homework completion and overall academic success for your students and children.

Download a flyer about HOPS for Parents and share directly with parents at your next meeting!

Order your copies at www.nasponline.org/publications
Positive Interventions for Difficult Cases

**Review by Robert J. Dixon**

This book is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to explaining the rationale and purpose of developing a strength-based approach to intervention. Often in school psychology, we are looking for the deficit or label in order to provide services and interventions. It was refreshing to see a strong argument for the strength-based viewpoint. Through research and case studies, Powell makes the argument for the importance of this approach. While this section tended to be a review, it was good to bring this information together, and the use of case studies nicely brought the concepts to life.

The second half of the book focused on strengths-based interventions (41 to be exact). These 41 interventions are organized into six broad categories: relationship development, optimistic attitude development, asset development, prosocial development, intellectual development, and provider development. Just like going through a buffet line, there are my old favorites (e.g., relationship-building exercises), ones that I try to avoid (e.g., learning styles), and ones that tempt me and look very interesting to try (e.g., mountain path analogy for neuroplasticity and developing habits, values/life card game). I also found the liberal case examples to be helpful to see the different strategies come to life. While many of the cases were hospital or treatment based for significant mental health issues, they were developed with enough detail that I began to think of situations that I could use the strategies for in the school setting. The final area that was covered was self-care for the clinician, and I think that it was a good choice and reminder that while we are here for the kids, it is important that we take care of ourselves. This included being strength-based in our interactions with colleagues.

While I read the entire book for this review, the practitioner can simply look for an intervention to fit a particular situation and sample it. The overview of the interventions may leave some readers wanting more, but I think most will find enough detail to add a few tools to their practice. In a world where many times teachers and administrators are looking to label and remove a student from a classroom, the interventions detailed in this book will allow one to take a different approach with a difficult case and hopefully end up in a much better place. In concluding the book, I must admit that I was left with a positive and energized feeling about the sheer number of positive interventions that could be implemented to meet some pretty trying situations.

**Practical Handbook of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Building Academic and Behavioral Success in Schools**

This book comprises six parts, which include detailed information on the importance of prevention science in schools; the importance of teaming and collaboration; how to make wanted change happen; using effective instruction within an MTSS; what an MTSS organizational structure should look like; and how to connect an MTSS with other supports. The authors incorporate a helpful background of the history and importance of prevention science in schools, as well as a detailed emphasis on academic and behavior approaches, including PBIS and RTI. Furthermore, specific information relating to tiered supports is discussed, including examples of specific academic and behavioral interventions, replacing core programs, and the relationship between Tier 3 intervention and comprehensive evaluations. Sometimes school personnel find themselves in situations where a clear goal is established, but the path to goal achievement is complex. Parts II and III of the book do an excellent job in describing all the crucial elements necessary for creating systems-level change within school buildings. Tips on teaming, including team function and buy-in, was an especially helpful portion of the book and would be useful to practitioners who find themselves in the early phases of building an MTSS model, or even those who need to make changes to their existing MTSS teams. Parts IV and V of the book thoroughly address the principles of effective instruction, utilizing a problem-solving framework, and using data to drive all decision making. This book makes it an excellent resource for those advocating for prevention-focused, systems-level change. The case example at the end of the book can be used as a guiding tool for those involved in an MTSS blueprint. Additionally, helpful, reproducible materials can be accessed in PDF form, including MTSS checklists and forms.

**Practitioners’ Guide to Creating an MTSS**

Reviewed by Karianne Rose

The book is divided into three sections with a broad scope of chapters ranging from fundamentals such as the history and theory of assessment and intervention to more esoteric topics such as neuropsychological assessment and interventions for health disparities among African American girls. The first section contains chapters on the history of assessment and intervention, theoretical frameworks of achievement, and ethical standards for testing ethnic minorities. The second and third sections of roughly equal lengths describe best practices of assessment and intervention respectively for ethnic minority students.

Each chapter in the first section emphasizes the historical roots and current trends toward increasing “fairness” in assessment and intervention practices with ethnic minorities. Controversy regarding IQ testing is addressed evenly. While the research base is significant regarding fair practices in testing, the authors make the point that empirical research for interventions with ethnic minority populations is lacking.

Section two delves into intellectual achievement, social–emotional, early childhood, and neuropsychological assessment. Given that many standardized tests do not fully account for cultural and linguistic differences for the assessment ethnic minorities, the authors provide insight on methods and strategies for obtaining the most valid results possible with these populations.

In section three, the chapters address reading, social–emotional, health, and consultative intervention research and practices for minority populations. The authors show that evidence-based interventions need to be tailored to meet students’ linguistic and cultural needs. Chapters 15 and 14, while not addressing interventions themselves, suggest protocols for applying research to practice utilizing single-subject research designs and improving the knowledge of school psychology graduate students with regard to diversity and multicultural competency.

At a whole, the volume emphasizes repeatedly the need for improved assessment and intervention practices for ethnic minority students. While there are many practical ideas provided, readers may be left guessing how to actually implement them. The authors freely admit that more research needs to be conducted with ethnic minorities to ensure that assessment is fair and interventions are effective. The underlying message of the text is clear: School psychologists must carefully consider the unique cultural background and linguistic development of each student individually when it comes to assessment and prescribing interventions.

**Improving Assessment of Minority Children**

**Review by Garry Wickeff**

 thermal Assessment and Intervention for Ethnic Minority Children, edited by Scott Graves and Jamilla Blake, is part of the Applying Psychological Science in Schools series published by APA. This volume purports to be a comprehensive resource incorporating the most current research, theories, and practices regarding assessment and intervention with ethnic minority students. Specifically, the editors claim that it is currently the only text with a focus on empirically researched interventions for ethnic minorities in school-based environments. Ultimately, the volume is meant to be a hands-on guide to assessment and intervention with ethnic minority children. The book is divided into three sections with a broad scope of chapters ranging from fundamentals such as the history and theory of assessment and intervention to more esoteric topics such as neuropsychological assessment and interventions for health disparities among African American girls. The first section contains chapters on the history of assessment and intervention, theoretical frameworks of achievement, and ethical standards for testing ethnic minorities. The second and third sections of roughly equal lengths describe best practices of assessment and intervention respectively for ethnic minority students.

Each chapter in the first section emphasizes the historical roots and current trends toward increasing “fairness” in assessment and intervention practices with ethnic minorities. Controversy regarding IQ testing is addressed evenly. While the research base is significant regarding fair practices in testing, the authors make the point that empirical research for interventions with ethnic minority populations is lacking.

Section two delves into intellectual achievement, social–emotional, early childhood, and neuropsychological assessment. Given that many standardized tests do not fully account for cultural and linguistic differences for the assessment ethnic minorities, the authors provide insight on methods and strategies for obtaining the most valid results possible with these populations.

In section three, the chapters address reading, social–emotional, health, and consultative intervention research and practices for minority populations. The authors show that evidence-based interventions need to be tailored to meet students’ linguistic and cultural needs. Chapters 15 and 14, while not addressing interventions themselves, suggest protocols for applying research to practice utilizing single-subject research designs and improving the knowledge of school psychology graduate students with regard to diversity and multicultural competency.

At a whole, the volume emphasizes repeatedly the need for improved assessment and intervention practices for ethnic minority students. While there are many practical ideas provided, readers may be left guessing how to actually implement them. The authors freely admit that more research needs to be conducted with ethnic minorities to ensure that assessment is fair and interventions are effective. The underlying message of the text is clear: School psychologists must carefully consider the unique cultural background and linguistic development of each student individually when it comes to assessment and prescribing interventions.
Evaluate Attention Disorders and Neurological Functioning Across the Lifespan.

**CONNERS K-CPT 2™**  
Conners Kiddie Continuous Performance Test 2nd Edition™  
For Ages 4 to 7  
7.5 minutes to complete and uses pictures of objects familiar to young children.  
MHS.com/KCPT2

**CONNERS CPT 3™**  
Conners Continuous Performance Test 3rd Edition™  
For Ages 8+  
A task-oriented computerized assessment of attention-related problems.  
MHS.com/CPT3

**CONNERS CATA®**  
Conners Continuous Auditory Test of Attention®  
For Ages 8+  
Assesses auditory processing and attention-related problems.  
MHS.com/CATA

Now available! Develop a comprehensive evaluation using the gold standard in CPT assessment with the Conners CPT 3™, an auditory test of attention with the Conners CATA®, and the Conners K-CPT 2™ now with an expanded age range.

- Easy interpretation with new reports offering clear visuals & summaries.
- Trusted results with the most representative CPT normative samples collected.
- New scores were developed to help pinpoint the exact nature of the child or adult’s attention problems.

Earn CE/CPD Credits with the Conners CPT 3/CATA/K-CPT 2.  
It is easy to earn CE/CPD credits quickly and online. Just study the manual, pass the online questionnaire, or take an online workshop, and a certificate is created for you!  
Learn more at MHS.com/Learn
COME TO THE SUMMER CONFERENCES

Cincinnati, OH  
July 10–12

Las Vegas, NV  
July 24–26

Join us for up to three days of learning specifically designed for practicing school psychologists!

• Learn from national leaders in the field
• Get intensive, advanced training
• Earn up to 18 hours of documented, NASP-approved CPD
• Get ahead for next school year

www.nasponline.org/summer

Register by MAY 12 TO SAVE!