



Guidelines for the Practice of **School Psychology**



Connecticut State Department of Education
2004

State of Connecticut

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Preface

Children and youth today face enormous challenges. How can their school experience help them meet these challenges? Educators, parents and community leaders are basically in accord. We want students to be capable and confident learners who will be productive, responsible, caring members of the workforce and the community. While academic proficiency is of paramount importance in our literate society, social and emotional learning are also crucial for the kind of success we want for students. Furthermore, these three skill areas mutually reinforce each other.

Students may succeed or fail academically for a multitude of reasons, including instructional methodology, motivation, relationships with peers or teachers, and capacity to cope with emotional challenges, stress, disabilities, and cultural or language differences.

School psychologists:

- ❖ are uniquely positioned to prepare students to meet the demands of the world in which they live;
- ❖ have specialized training in both psychology and education, which extends their expertise far beyond the most familiar role of conducting evaluations to determine special educational needs;
- ❖ can support the social, emotional and academic learning goals of all students, and provide services that impact learning at the individual, small group, classroom, building or school district level; and
- ❖ collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, other school specialists and other health professionals to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy and supportive environment.

This document elaborates the many ways that school psychologists can support the educational process. Given the challenges of contemporary education, we cannot afford to overlook or underutilize this important resource. The perceived obstacles to using school psychological services to best advantage are often illusory. Schools psychologists can make significant contributions to the learning and healthy development of children and adolescents, especially in school districts that fully recognize the value of their services.

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Introduction to the Practice of School Psychology in Connecticut



“In addition to knowledge about prevention, intervention, and evaluation for a number of childhood problems, school psychologists have unique expertise regarding issues of learning and schools. It is [school psychologists’] ethical responsibility to become involved in programs aimed at problems that are broader than assessing and diagnosing what is wrong with a child. As the most experienced school professionals in this area, school psychologists must become invested in addressing social and human ills. . . .” (Sheridan and Gutkin, 2000)

The discipline of psychology is fundamental to teaching, learning and child development. School psychologists have training and experience in the core areas of psychology and education and represent the pursuits of both fields. They occupy a uniquely pivotal position at the intersection of both professions, and therefore can significantly advance the accomplishment of a broad range of school goals in the areas of behavior, learning and mental health. They offer a problem-solving orientation based on research, empirically proven practices, and data-based decision making, which is applied to the design and implementation of effective academic and behavioral interventions. Their traditional role encompasses prevention, assessment, counseling and consultation.

The contemporary paradigm of school psychology practice is driven by two decades of significant advances in assessment and intervention techniques which can substantially improve positive educational outcomes in students (Reschly and Ysseldyke, 2002). Modern assessment and intervention techniques, and the practice of school psychology in general, are characterized by the following:

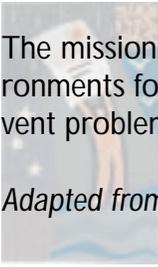
- ❖ an emphasis on consultation, functional behavioral assessment, curriculum-based measurement, and ecological assessment of learner/environment systems applied to the design of instructional, social, emotional and behavioral interventions;
- ❖ a focus on service outcomes, accountability and data-based decision making that links assessment directly to intervention;
- ❖ a data-based problem-solving orientation emphasizing empirically supported interventions;
- ❖ a focus on wellness and health, prevention, counseling and building competencies with a concomitant de-emphasis on pathology, deficits and labeling; and
- ❖ a systemic orientation characterized by the provision of a comprehensive, integrated program of school psychological services to all learners, their families and those who serve them.

The emphasis placed by the previous generation of school psychologists on testing for deficits followed by categorization and placement is slowly fading into obsolescence and evolving into a new paradigm whereby school psychologists apply a comprehensive range of assessment and intervention skills at every level of the system. This shift in emphasis is in keeping with the Connecticut State Board of Education’s (2001) vision of how school psychologists and other student support services specialists (i.e., school counselors, school nurses, school social workers,

health educators and speech and language pathologists) make unique contributions to students' attainment of educational achievement and personal-social well-being. (See Appendix A.)

These guidelines describe a model of exemplary school psychology practice. As these guidelines are implemented across the state, the potential to substantially improve the social, emotional, behavioral and academic development of students, families, school personnel and their communities is profound.

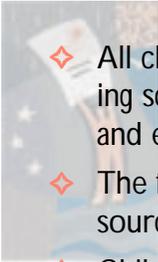
Mission



The mission of school psychologists is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for *all* children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence and promote optimal learning.

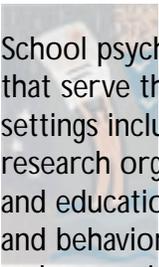
Adapted from National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Mission Statement, 1997

Philosophy

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- ❖ All children and youth deserve a free and appropriate public education in a safe and nurturing school environment that promotes cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and encourages family involvement.
 - ❖ The future well-being of a community depends on the commitment of finances and resources to develop and maintain accessible support systems for children and families today.
 - ❖ Children learn best in communities where educators are valued and treated with respect, and are learners themselves.
 - ❖ All children have a right to at least one caring and capable adult in their lives.
 - ❖ Early effective interventions and collaborative services will best prepare children for success in the future.
 - ❖ School psychologists are change agents and facilitators who collaborate with key stakeholders in families, schools and communities to promote the healthy development of *all* children and youth.
 - ❖ School psychologists have unique training that encompasses learning and cognition, as well as social and emotional development, and provides an integrated perspective of service within the context of the school.
 - ❖ School psychologists respect individual differences of students and families, and recognize that diversity contributes to a strong and just society.
 - ❖ School psychologists promote early interventions and data-based decision making to support children and families.

Adapted from NASP Strategic Plan, 1997

Scope of Practice of School Psychologists€



School psychologists serve students of all ages and their families, as well as the systems or agencies that serve them. Most school psychologists work in public schools, but some work in various other settings including private schools, universities, school-based health centers, correctional facilities, research organizations and private practice. Their broad training in the core areas of psychology and education puts them in an ideal position to integrate and coordinate educational, psychological and behavioral health services (American Psychological Association, 1998). They are positioned to make meaningful contributions anywhere an integration of educational and psychological knowledge bases can be brought to bear in solving a problem or accomplishing an educational goal.

The Domains of School Psychology Leadership and Function in the Schools

Documents published by the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Psychological Association and the Connecticut State Department of Education outline the scope of practice of school psychologists. The organization of this section borrows significantly from the conceptualization of domains of school psychology practice published in *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II* (Ysseldyke, et al., 1997), the *NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* (NASP, 2000e), and the *NASP Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services* (NASP, 2000a). This section also draws from and builds on *Developing Quality Programs for Pupil Services: A Self-Evaluative Guide* (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1999). Other resources consulted are cited at the end of this document.

The scope of practice for school psychologists can be summarized under 11 general domains. School psychologists have competence in all of the domains, though not all will have the highest level of expertise in all aspects of each domain. Each school psychologist will have distinct subspecialties or areas of expertise across the 11 domains.

Domain I: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability

School psychologists are problem solvers. They are experts at collecting data, analyzing and integrating information, and measuring outcomes for educational and psychological interventions. This broadly defined assessment and accountability orientation informs every activity of school psychologists as they work to help accomplish the goals of the school system. Some examples of the contributions school psychologists can make in this domain are as follows:

- ❖ School psychologists assess educational outcomes and their instructional implications for individuals, groups or districts using achievement or mastery tests, student portfolios, performance-based assessment and curriculum-based measurement. They contribute in this way to meeting school district accountability standards.
- ❖ School psychologists evaluate individual students using a variety of assessment methods including testing, observation, interviewing and reviewing of existing data to determine students' educational needs, and design and evaluate interventions to address those needs.

- ❖ School psychologists collect data on individual students, classrooms and programs to design effective interventions to enhance service delivery and to evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions.
- ❖ School psychologists assess aspects of the classroom and school environments that contribute to or detract from the social, emotional and academic development of students using classroom ecological and functional behavioral assessment data.

Domain II: Interpersonal Communication, Collaboration and Consultation

School psychologists possess interpersonal skills to foster communication and collaboration among school personnel, families, students and the community. They have expertise in systems consultation at the individual, classroom, school and district levels. Some examples of the services school psychologists can offer in this domain include the following:

- ❖ School psychologists act as change agents at all levels of the system by facilitating communication and cooperation among all members of the school community.
- ❖ School psychologists facilitate cooperation and collaboration among teachers, administrators and other school professionals, and can facilitate effective operation of various kinds of school-based teams.
- ❖ School psychologists consult with parents or guardians, teachers and administrators to help with problem solving in the home, classroom, school and district.

Domain III: Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills

School psychologists help classroom teachers and other school personnel develop challenging but appropriate academic goals for all students, and apply learning and cognitive theory to the development of instructional strategies. They work with other educators to apply empirically demonstrated instructional processes to facilitate student achievement. Examples of school psychologists' contributions in this domain include the following:

- ❖ School psychologists help teachers develop alternative instructional strategies or programs to meet the needs of all students in the classroom.
- ❖ School psychologists provide other educators with timely research on instruction from the psychological and educational literature.
- ❖ School psychologists help special education staff members develop appropriate goals, strategies and outcome measurement methods for students with special needs.

Domain IV: Socialization and Development of Life Competencies

School psychologists help develop challenging but appropriate affective, behavioral and socialization goals for all students, and promote school environments where all members of the school community treat one another with respect. They use intervention strategies such as behavioral intervention; consultation; individual, group, classroom and family counseling; and schoolwide programs to enhance school climate and reduce alienation. Some examples of the contributions school psychologists can make in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists design and implement individual, classroom and schoolwide programs in social skills, social problem solving, conflict resolution, decision making and life skills.
- ❖ School psychologists design and implement alternative approaches to classroom management and student discipline, behavior management, ecological intervention and enhancement of classroom climate.
- ❖ School psychologists provide individual, group, classroom and family counseling to help students perform better socially, emotionally and academically.

Domain V: Student Diversity in Development and Learning

School psychologists have expertise in the psychology of individual differences and apply this knowledge to develop and implement interventions based on the individual characteristics of the person, family or system. They possess knowledge of, and sensitivity to, individual abilities and disabilities and diverse racial, cultural, biological, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic and gender-related backgrounds, and apply that knowledge across a broad range of strategies to promote student development and learning. Some examples of how school psychologists can help in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists help identify the specific learning needs of individual students and develop instructional strategies for schools to meet those needs. They assess cognitive abilities, social and emotional functioning, academic performance and sensory-motor skills, and diagnose a full range of psychological and educational strengths and disorders as they pertain to the educational process.
- ❖ School psychologists foster sensitivity to diversity issues within the school community and promote the integration of the diverse talents and strengths of all groups into the educational programs of the school.

Domain VI: School Structure, Organization and Climate

School psychologists provide leadership in organizing schools in ways that promote learning, high expectations for excellence, and a sense of caring, safety and community. Some examples of services school psychologists can offer in this domain include the following:

- ❖ School psychologists help design and participate in student support teams, coordinated school-based health teams, school climate committees, character education committees, and

other efforts dedicated to improving school climate and service to students.

- ❖ School psychologists help design school policies on such issues as grading, discipline, referral systems, complaint procedures and transitions.

Domain VII: Prevention, Wellness Promotion and Crisis Intervention

School psychologists develop schoolwide comprehensive programs that make school psychological services available to all students. As health care providers, they emphasize prevention and wellness throughout the school community. In the event of a crisis, they provide leadership in helping students, school personnel, families and the community to respond and to heal. Some examples of the contributions school psychologists can make in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists help design and implement wellness and health promotion programs in areas such as substance abuse, nutrition and eating disorders, AIDS prevention and stress management.
- ❖ School psychologists provide a variety of health promotion activities to improve morale, reduce stress, reduce absenteeism and improve wellness among school staff members.
- ❖ School psychologists design programs to prevent and intervene in situations involving serious academic, behavioral or emotional difficulties.
- ❖ School psychologists design and implement procedures to support students, school staff members and families during times of crisis.
- ❖ School psychologists collaborate with other school service providers in designing a comprehensive and integrated system of school psychology services within the school community.
- ❖ School psychologists can help teach units in the health curriculum for students in all grades, or secondary-level courses in psychology or social sciences.

Domain VIII: Home-School-Community Collaboration

School psychologists, individually or in collaboration with other professionals (e.g., teachers, student support services specialists, community providers), design and implement programs to encourage home-school collaboration. They provide parent counseling, training and consultation to promote student learning and development. They take a leadership role in promoting collaboration and coordination with community agencies and resources. Some examples of how school psychologists can help in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists design and conduct a variety of activities for supporting parents and families and enhancing the home-school connection. Such activities may include parent training in effective discipline and behavior management, study skills, understanding school rules and procedures, and how to participate effectively in special education meetings and parent/teacher conferences.

- ❖ School psychologists participate in parent conferences, facilitate positive interactions between parents and school staff members, and help resolve conflicts that may occur.
- ❖ School psychologists work with parent and community organizations to promote parent-school collaboration and act as a resource for educational or psychological knowledge.
- ❖ School psychologists facilitate collaboration among community resources to develop integrated efforts to address the needs of the school community.

Domain IX: Research and Program Evaluation

School psychologists apply their knowledge of statistics, measurement and research design to evaluate school programs. They interpret and explain their analyses in a clear way to school personnel and the public. Some examples of how school psychologists can contribute in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists make psychometrically sound recommendations regarding a school district's testing policies and procedures.
- ❖ School psychologists help school personnel analyze and interpret data generated from a variety of sources within the school system.
- ❖ School psychologists help design research protocols to answer local school district questions about their programs or practices. They assist in data-based program evaluation and decision making. They also design research to address more fundamental questions in the fields of education or psychology.

Domain X: Legal, Ethical Practice and Professional Development

School psychologists accept their obligation to maintain the highest level of legal, ethical and professional practice. They pursue a plan of continuing professional development for themselves, and contribute to the professional development of colleagues by providing professional presentations, professional writing, clinical supervision or other forms of continuing professional development. Examples of how school psychologists can help in this domain are the following:

- ❖ School psychologists offer staff development activities for school personnel in areas such as instructional strategies, classroom management, psychological development and understanding the needs of all students.
- ❖ School psychologists consult with administrators and other school personnel to develop comprehensive school psychology programs that are consistent with best practices in the field.

Domain XI: Information Technology

School psychologists apply their knowledge of technology in ways that enhance the quality of their services. Some examples of services school psychologists can offer in this domain include the following:

- ❖ School psychologists use information sources and technology to access current research and professional literature to apply to solving problems.
- ❖ School psychologists consult with other professionals regarding the selection and use of instructional and adaptive technology when designing programs and interventions for students.

Connecticut Applications

In Connecticut, a comprehensive service delivery model as described in this document is gaining ascendancy over the increasingly obsolete “test and place” model. In most districts there exists a mixture of the old and new models, with some districts and even some individual school psychologists within the same district further along than others in the adoption of the new model. In those districts adopting a comprehensive service delivery model, the results have been positive. The examples provided in Appendix B are not meant to be an exhaustive survey of school psychological services in Connecticut, but are offered to give some idea of school psychology practices already being implemented in urban, suburban and rural districts that exemplify the range of services proposed in these guidelines.

Making Optimal Use of School Psychological Services

School psychology services, like other school district resources, are typically overtaxed and in short supply. School district personnel need to make thoughtful decisions about how to make optimal use of these resources. School administrators in Connecticut have had to be creative in optimizing and protecting available school psychological services that promote social, emotional, and academic learning, such as those described in Appendix B.

Naturally, the question arises as to the practicality of implementing a service delivery model that shifts the emphasis of service to prevention, systemic intervention, and collaboration. In today's educational environment, the model espoused in these guidelines is not only practical, but necessary in order to meet the needs of all students despite limited resources. Rising student enrollments continue to outpace districts' ability to provide school psychological services within the old model. Schools can no longer afford to wait for children to fail and then assign school psychologists to treat them one by one. Under the new model, school psychologists deliver services that prevent the need for special education and other costly specialized services. While school psychologists will likely continue to provide remedial services, greater emphasis on prevention, consultation, collaboration and indirect services will prevent students from failing and obviate the need for more expensive, more intrusive interventions.

School administrators are encouraged to learn more about the skills school psychologists bring to districts to ensure that they are getting the most out of their existing staff (see Desrochers, 2003). Administrators and school psychologists can work together to pilot innovative deployment of school psychologists in their districts. To ensure that resources are being used effectively and efficiently, administrators can make use of school psychologists' skills in data-based decision making and program evaluation, and their knowledge of empirically supported interventions.

Administrators might consider the following strategies to optimize use of school psychological services:

- ❖ providing clerical support to minimize certain paperwork and activities that do not require professional skills or oversight;
- ❖ using time-saving technology (e.g., laptop computers, test-scoring software);
- ❖ enabling school psychologists to expand, and make full use of, expertise in specialized areas (e.g., neuropsychology, positive behavioral supports, autism);
- ❖ reviewing district requirements and practices that yield relatively little value per time invested (e.g., unnecessarily extensive re-evaluations); and
- ❖ making staff assignments strategically so as to support and protect high-yield projects and activities.

The cost-benefit equation clearly favors the practices espoused in these guidelines. School psychologists and administrators must be resourceful to ensure that school psychological services deliver on their potential to improve education for Connecticut's students.

Future Trends in the Practice of School Psychology

The practice of school psychology, although rooted in the traditional broad foundations of assessment, prevention, counseling and consultation, evolves over time as new challenges arise and new methodologies are developed to meet those challenges. Now and for the foreseeable future, school psychology will continue to emphasize the following outcomes for students, families and schools (APA & NASP, 2003):

- ❖ improved academic competence for all children;
- ❖ improved social-emotional functioning for all children;
- ❖ enhanced family-school partnerships and parental involvement in schools;
- ❖ more effective education and instruction for all learners; and
- ❖ increased child and family services in schools that promote health and mental health and are integrated with community services.

School psychologists will increasingly incorporate into everyday practice the following themes (APA and NASP, 2003):

- ❖ a focus on evidence-based approaches to assessment, intervention and practice;
- ❖ a reduced emphasis on traditional individual assessment and increased emphasis on linking assessment directly to intervention and accountability;
- ❖ increased focus on families and improving academic, social and emotional functioning of students through family-school collaboration;
- ❖ incorporation of public health models into school practice, basing prevention strategies on systemic assessments of risk and protective factors;
- ❖ increased collaboration among professions (counseling, social work) and across specialties of psychology (school, counseling, clinical); and
- ❖ increased incorporation of cross-cultural competency in all aspects of practice.

Much of what is here predicted as future practice in school psychology is occurring to varying degrees in Connecticut already. School districts that promote practice consistent with these outcomes and themes will emerge as leaders in school psychology programming in Connecticut over the next several years.

School Psychologist Credentialing

All school psychologists must be certified by the State Department of Education. Minimal training requirements for certification include completion of a planned program of study in school psychology at an accredited institution with at least sixty graduate credits, and completion of a full year supervised school psychology internship. The initial educator certificate may be issued on a limited basis for an intern who is currently enrolled in a graduate program and has completed all requirements other than the internship. A complete description of certification and continuing education unit (CEU) requirements can be found at the State Department of Education website at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert>.

Beyond the entry-level requirement of certification by the State Department of Education, some school psychologists pursue more advanced credentialing.

- ❖ The Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential is granted to State Department of Education certified school psychologists who pass the written examination and meet the training and experience standards of the National School Psychology Certification Board.
- ❖ Some school psychologists have, or pursue, doctoral-level training in school psychology and are granted the Ph.D., Psy.D., D.Ed. or Ed.D. in school psychology.
- ❖ Some school psychologists who hold a doctorate are also licensed as psychologists by the state's Department of Public Health. Licensure generally requires the doctorate with a yearlong internship and an additional year of supervised postdoctoral work experience, and passage of a written examination.

- ❖ Some doctoral-level school psychologists are also board certified as school psychologists by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and are fellows of the American Academy of School Psychology. This credential requires State Department of Education certification and Department of Public Health licensure as described above and, in addition, a written evaluation of the school psychologist's practice and an oral examination by ABPP.
- ❖ Licensed doctoral-level school psychologists with particular training and experience as health care providers may also be listed with the National Register of Health Care Providers in Psychology (NRHCPP).

Many certified school psychologists also hold graduate degrees and certifications or licensure in teaching, counseling, administration and supervision, and other related professional fields.

The Practice of School Psychology in the Private Sector

Most school psychologists practice within the public school sector, but some also practice within the private sector. Practice in the private sector is regulated by both the *Principles for Professional Ethics* (NASP, 2000b) and Connecticut state statute. Connecticut General Statutes Section 20-193 through 20-195, which govern the activities of psychologists and restricts the use of the title "psychologist," specifies those professional services that school psychologists may provide in the private sector:

Nothing in this chapter shall prevent any person who holds a standard or Professional Educator Certificate, granted by said board, as school psychologist or school psychological examiner from using such title to describe his activities within the private sector. Such activities within the private sector shall be limited to: 1) Evaluation, diagnosis, or test interpretation limited to assessment of intellectual ability, learning patterns, achievement, motivation, or personality factors directly related to learning problems in an educational setting; 2) short-term professional advisement and interpretive services with children or adults for amelioration or prevention of educationally related problems; 3) educational or vocational consultation or direct educational services to schools, agencies, organizations or individuals, said consultation being directly related to learning problems; and 4) development of educational programs such as designing more efficient and psychologically sound classroom situations and acting as a catalyst for teacher involvement in adaptations and innovations. [C.G.S. Section 20-195(h)]

In accordance with ethical principles, a school psychologist in private practice would not accept referrals from families residing in the school district in which the school psychologist is employed.

A school psychologist who is certified by the State Department of Education may provide school psychological services to a school district on a contractual basis for the purpose of procuring specialized services not available within the school district (e.g., bilingual evaluation, neuropsychological evaluation, program planning for a child with autism, clinical supervision) or to provide coverage for a leave of absence.

A school psychologist who also holds a license as a psychologist from the State Department of Public Health may perform additional functions under that license consistent with his or her areas of competence.

Training Standards for Connecticut School Psychologists€

In Connecticut, training to become a school psychologist emphasizes preparation in child development, mental health, evaluation and diagnosis, school organization, learning and behavior. Standards for training programs are such that the following competencies are expected upon completion of the program:

- I. School psychologists demonstrate **foundational knowledge** in the following areas:
 - A. Child development
 - B. Human diversity
 - C. Educational and special education law
 - D. Ethics
 - E. History of and best practices in school psychology
 - F. Information technology
 - G. Systems psychology
- II. School psychologists demonstrate **general skills** in the following areas:
 - A. Reading, writing, math
 - B. Interpersonal communication and relationship building
 - C. Scientific problem solving
- III. School psychologists demonstrate **specialized skills** in the following areas:
 - A. Direct service
 1. Assessment of students' cognitive, academic, social-emotional and behavioral functioning
 2. Development, implementation and evaluation of individual and group interventions (e.g., counseling, behavior modification, whole-class group, entire-school programs, etc.) that address cognitive, social, emotional and physical problems of students
 3. Crisis intervention
 4. Early intervention screening
 - B. Indirect service
 - C. Consultation and collaboration with teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and community agencies
 - D. In-service education for teachers, support staff, administrators and parents
 - E. Needs assessment
- IV. School psychologists demonstrate **prevention strategies** at the individual and system levels.
 - A. The cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth of *all* students will be nurtured through whole-class lessons and schoolwide programs to promote a safe, positive climate for the entire school community.
 - B. Programs will be developed, implemented and evaluated according to best practices and current research.

- C. Resources will be provided for school and community members.
- D. School psychologists will assist in the design of policies, plans and rules that promote a safe, positive climate for the entire school community.
- V. School psychologists are committed to **professional growth** through:
 - A. Personal goal setting and accountability
 - B. Supervision
 - C. Seeking to provide best practices
 - D. Engaging in professional development activities
 - E. Reflective practice
 - F. Ethical practice
 - G. Professional advocacy
 - H. Professional organization affiliation

Nonbiased Assessment

School psychologists conduct assessments to provide information that is helpful in maximizing student achievement, educational success, psychological adjustment and behavioral adaptation. They use assessment techniques and instruments that have established validity and reliability for the purposes and populations for which the procedures are intended. When a student's sensory, motor or language skills, or behavior, compromise the validity of a test, the school psychologist describes how the assessment varied from standard conditions and adjusts interpretation of results accordingly. Assessment techniques are used only by personnel professionally trained in their use and in a manner consistent with the National Association of School Psychologists' *Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services* (NASP, 2000a).

School psychologists recognize the strengths and limitations of their training and experience and only engage in practices in which they are competent. Nonbiased assessment procedures and program recommendations are chosen that maximize the student's opportunities to be successful in the general culture while respecting the student's ethnic background. Multifaceted assessment batteries include a focus on the student's strengths.

Evaluation of bilingual students

Evaluation of bilingual students is conducted in the student's dominant spoken language or alternative communication system. All student information is interpreted in the context of the student's sociocultural background and the setting in which he or she is functioning. If interpreters are used, they are trained so that the test administration is conducted in a manner that approximates standardization procedures as closely as possible. An effort is made to identify and minimize any bias on the part of the interpreter so as not to invalidate the evaluation data. Recognition is given to the fact that the difficulty level of a test item often changes when it is translated into a different language. In addition, school psychologists must be aware of potential discrimination when test items are not as familiar to persons from a different cultural background as they are to persons from the norming group.

Ethical Principles of School Psychologists



Ethical codes are intentionally broad, and not every specific situation is covered in any code, placing an extraordinary responsibility on individual school psychologists to be knowledgeable about the ethical principles and professional standards in their field. In general, however, Jacob-Timm and Hartshorne (1998) found four broad ethical principles to be common to codes of ethics for helping professions. These may be considered a common core of values for the profession.

- ❖ **Respect for the dignity of persons** - including respect for their right to privacy and confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy, and fairness and nondiscrimination.
- ❖ **Professional competence and responsibility** - meaning that school psychologists practice within their range of competence, accept responsibility for their actions, and practice in a way that benefits others and does no harm.
- ❖ **Integrity in professional relationships** - ensuring that school psychologists are honest and forthcoming about their scope of practice, competencies and potential conflicts of interest. They understand, respect and cooperate with the work of other professionals.
- ❖ **Responsibility to community and society** - meaning that school psychologists have responsibilities to advance the welfare of all people in the broader communities in which they live.

Applicable Ethical Codes

The two major professional associations in school psychology, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American Psychological Association (APA), have developed codes of ethics and professional standards for the delivery of service. The National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and other professional organizations have their own codes of ethics. All members of these organizations agree to abide by these ethical principles and professional standards. School psychologists who are members of the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists (CASP) or the National School Psychology Certification System are bound to abide by the *NASP Professional Conduct Manual* (NASP, 2000c). School psychologists who are members of the Connecticut Psychological Association are bound to abide by APA's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (APA, 2002). Members of CASP are also bound to abide by the *Procedural Guidelines for the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists Ethics and Professional Practice Committee* (CASP, 2000). Members of APA and NASP also agree to consider the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, 1999) developed by the American Educational Research Association, the APA and the National Council on Measurement in Education, in judging whether their assessment procedures meet technical standards. Finally, all school psychologists in Connecticut are bound to Connecticut's *Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers* or *Code of Professional Responsibility for School Administrators* (CSBE, 1998). Consistent with applicable law, these principles serve as a basis for decisions on issues pertaining to certification and employment.

Adjudication

NASP will investigate and adjudicate violations of the *Principles for Professional Ethics* section of the *NASP Professional Conduct Manual*. The *Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services* section of that manual represent the position of NASP regarding best practices in the delivery of comprehensive school psychological services but are not adjudicated. The APA will adjudicate violations of its *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*.

Other Resources

Aside from the ethical codes and standards of NASP and APA, school psychologists sometimes consult other sources of guidance for ethical and professional practice. Articles in professional journals published by NASP and APA provide timely information and discussion of specialized topics. Books such as *Ethics and Law for School Psychologists* (Jacob and Hartshorne, 2003) and *Best Practices in School Psychology IV* (Thomas and Grimes, 2002) are excellent sources of commentary on ethical principles and professional practice. NASP and APA publish position statements that represent the official views of those organizations on a variety of subjects.

Best Practices

School psychologists should maintain membership in at least one professional organization and abide by its ethical principles and guidelines. All school psychologists, whether they are members of a professional association or not, should be familiar with these principles and guidelines.

Administration, Supervision, Evaluation and Professional Development

The *Professional Conduct Manual* (NASP, 2000c) and related documents developed by the National Association of School Psychologists promote an integrated set of comprehensive standards for the preparation, credentialing and professional practice of school psychologists. These standards recommend that the school psychology services unit provide supervision adequate to ensure the provision of effective and accountable services. Supervision is provided through an ongoing, positive, systematic, collaborative process between the school psychologist and the school psychology supervisor (NASP, 2000c).

Competent supervision of *clinical skills* (i.e., specialized skills required for the practice of school psychology, but not common to educators) promotes, enhances and updates the professional growth of the school psychologist. As it relates to school psychology, the term “supervision” incorporates activities performed at two levels. At the individual level, clinical supervision refers to face-to-face supervision sessions between the school psychologist and the supervising school psychologist. These sessions are designed to improve clinical skills related to assessment, counseling, consultation and other school psychology role requirements. Group supervision has the same goal — the enhancement of clinical skills — but refers to sessions with a group of two or more school psychologists and the supervising school psychologist. Group and individual clinical supervision require technical proficiency in school psychology and should only be provided by a certified school psychologist, preferably with training in the area of supervision and evaluation (CSDE, 1999b; NASP, 2000c).

Administrative supervision may be provided by appropriately credentialed individuals who are knowledgeable about school psychology, such as a building or district administrator (CSBE, 2001). Administrative supervision includes such activities as adherence to school policy and state and federal regulations, and the day-to-day nonclinical duties performed by the school psychologist.

Districts should provide adequate clinical supervision and professional resources to meet the needs of their school psychology staff members. Clinical supervision of school psychologists requires discipline-specific training and expertise (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1999) and experience in the practice of school psychology. A lead school psychologist should be designated by a school system to respond to practice issues in school psychology such as appropriate assessment techniques, best practice methods in counseling and consultation, and skill building in all role functions. Supervision should be offered on an individual basis for all new staff members, interns and veteran professionals. For interns and first-year school psychologists, face-to-face supervision should be provided for at least two hours weekly (NASP, 2000d; NASP, 2000e). Individual clinical supervision for the experienced school psychologist should be arranged based on individual and district needs. Peer/group supervision is a viable source for staff supervision and development. Peer mentoring is another means of ensuring sufficient opportunities for professional growth and development for novice school psychologists.

Supervision also includes professional development activities offered through department meetings, workshops and conferences. These activities are part of a comprehensive clinical supervision plan developed for a school psychology staff. Professional development days offer an excellent opportunity for school psychologists to pursue leadership opportunities, learn new counseling techniques, review new assessment methods, and participate in program review and planning. School systems should provide professional development activities such as peer supervision and workshops specific to school psychology training and expertise. The Connecticut Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Psychological Association and the Connecticut State Department of Education consultant for school psychology are all valuable resources in this regard.

Supervisors should encourage school psychologists to participate in state and national associations to maintain professional identity and an up-to-date knowledge of the field of school psychology. Supervisors should promote and support the participation of school psychologists in professional development workshops offered outside the school system to obtain knowledge and to network with fellow school psychologists.

The school psychology supervisor, in addition to having responsibility for staff development and supervision, should assume the following roles and responsibilities:

- ❖ Coordinate school psychology services in an organized manner for all students and families.
- ❖ Develop procedures that standardize school psychology practice.
- ❖ Provide information regarding available community resources.
- ❖ Be a liaison to other administrators, helping them understand school psychology roles and practices and advocating for effective school psychology practice within the school system and the community.

- ❖ Be a supporter of school psychology staff members.
- ❖ Be a teacher/supporter of methods to enhance the school psychologist's ability to communicate school psychology knowledge and skills in an educational setting.
- ❖ Provide a link between school psychology and other support services, special education and general education staff members.
- ❖ Provide direction by establishing priorities and evaluating programs.
- ❖ Develop a budget for the purchase of necessary clinical and professional materials.
- ❖ Provide professional leadership through participation in school psychology and related professional organizations.
- ❖ Assist staff members in developing a formal professional development plan annually.
- ❖ Encourage and assist staff members in seeking advanced recognition (e.g., degrees, levels established by state, district and national recognition bodies).
- ❖ Develop and provide professional development activities designed to enhance clinical skills.
- ❖ Develop, with the school psychology staff, an effective job description and evaluation instruments.
- ❖ Develop liaisons with other school psychology services units to share professional development activities and to help in policy development and methods.

In districts where the administrator is *not* a certified school psychologist, administrative supervision is recommended but cannot address the need for staff support and professional growth. It is recommended that a designated lead school psychologist provide clinical supervision. School systems may need to share supervisors with other districts or appoint a lead school psychologist on a part-time basis.

Similar dilemmas may arise in trying to assure that staff evaluation accomplishes its intended purpose. Under state law, evaluation of professional school district employees is conducted in accordance with State Board of Education guidelines, plus whatever guidelines are established through the local school district's labor agreement. The latter typically assigns exclusive responsibility for staff evaluation to administrators. In order to promote professional growth, evaluation of school psychologists' clinical skills is best conducted by an appropriately certified school psychologist. Many school districts, however, do not have an administrator who is certified in school psychology. In this situation, innovative arrangements for evaluating and supervising school psychologists (and other support services specialists) might be explored. For example, (1) a school psychologist with administrator's certification might be designated as a supervisor, or coordinator, and have a split position as both administrator and school psychologist, or (2) a special arrangement might be made for smaller districts to share an administrator.

Evaluation of school psychologists should be based on a comprehensive job description and performance standards. In evaluating school psychologists, observation of performance is desirable and may include videotaping, audio taping, or direct observation of performance. (Ethical principles concerning informed consent and confidentiality are, of course, followed in conducting such observations.) Other evaluative techniques frequently used encompass psychological report review, individualized education program (IEP) goal review, functional behavior plan review, assessment review, review of direct and indirect interventions, and review of process notes for individual/group

counseling. It may be helpful to a school psychologist to develop a yearly portfolio. The supervisor may also review with school psychologists their contributions to the unit's goals and vision. School psychologists may also be asked to review their involvement in the field and their ongoing professional development as demonstrated by their attendance at professional development activities and their membership in state, local and national organizations. School psychologists may find themselves evaluated by an administrator who is not certified as a school psychologist. In this instance, evaluation in this instance should not extend to specialized clinical skills.

The school psychological services unit should develop indicators of effective performance for all major roles and functions. Performance effectiveness should be based on both summative and formative evaluations. The process of formative and summative evaluation should be clearly delineated by both the school psychology staff and building staff to encourage consistency and continuity.

School psychological services units should also conduct program evaluations of the effectiveness and range of school psychology services offered in a school system. This may include the completion of questionnaires by parents, administrators, teachers, students and student support services specialists. It can also involve review of the mission, vision and goals of the unit.

It is also recommended that the supervisor solicit feedback from the school psychology staff. Samples of forms that may be useful for this purpose — the *Supervisor Evaluation Form* (Harvey & Struzziero, 2000) and *Leadership Behavior Rating Scale* (Johnson, 1998) — are provided in Appendices C and D. It may be advisable to offer school psychology staff members the opportunity to complete an evaluation of the supervisor anonymously.

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Appendix A

State Board of Education

Position Statement on Student Support Services

Adopted May 2, 2001

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that Connecticut's public education system has the duty to provide a continuum of developmental, preventative, remedial, and supportive services that enhance opportunities for all students to achieve academic success and personal well-being. Many students must overcome challenges that place them at risk for educational failure, including poverty, family dysfunction, emotional trauma, linguistic and ethnic differences, and community violence. Contemporary public school education requires a collaborative approach to service delivery that includes parental involvement, use of community-based resources, learning experiences that encourage and accommodate individual student needs, and effective use of student support services. Prevention-oriented services such as early intervention for academic and motivational problems, teaching of communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution and other life skills, and the promotion of physical and mental well-being through coordinated school health programs are necessary components of cost-effective educational programs.

Student support services provide assistance to the entire student population, parents, and the school community. Disciplines providing support services include school counseling, school nursing, school psychology, school social work, health education and speech and language services. Student support services specialists, with their skills in working with children and families and their knowledge of the emotional, cultural, health and communication issues that affect students and schools, play an important role in improving student achievement. Support services specialists assist other educators to understand and respond effectively to the human and social factors that impact learning, and improve student availability for learning by identifying risk factors and providing timely interventions. Identifying student strengths and talents, and assisting students in the development of post-secondary plans that incorporate such strengths and talents, are also key components of effective support services.

Home and community are critical environments that influence student well-being and educational progress. Support services specialists, in partnership with teachers, administrators and other school staff, build connections between home and school, especially when parents need help in understanding their children's educational needs and their own role in encouraging learning. These professionals are often in the best position to maintain open lines of communication while they interpret school requirements and assist families in expressing their concerns. Support services specialists understand the community and its impact on the lives of students and families, and can link the home and school to community resources, expedite appropriate referrals, and facilitate communication between home, school, and community services.

To use student support services to full advantage, school districts are advised to adopt the following practices:

1. Districts should implement prevention-oriented programs and services that promote a positive school climate in which individuals feel connected, safe and supported, and that reduce the prevalence of risky behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, early sexual activity, bullying and violence, truancy and school avoidance.

2. Districts should implement a comprehensive PreK-12 life skills curriculum that delineates goals and competencies in the areas of personal/social, career and academic development, and prepares students for success in school, at work, in the community and in personal relationships.
3. Districts should establish school-based and/or district-wide support services teams to assess the health and mental health needs of the school community, and coordinate the delivery of an array of services that includes prevention, early intervention, intervention and crisis response. These teams should include support services specialists, school administrators and representatives of community agencies (e.g., police, Department of Children and Families, health and mental health care providers).
4. Support services specialists should analyze existing research to identify best practices in the provision of student support services, and design evaluation studies to assess effectiveness of district programs and services.
5. Districts should provide continuing education for all school professionals on collaborative models of service delivery to prepare them to recognize students at risk for educational or social failure and to team with support services providers, families and community providers in improving student outcomes.
6. Support services specialists should be included in regular education intervention teams (e.g., Early Intervention Team, Student Assistance Team), providing professional consultation and support to both school staff and parents.
7. Districts should use the State Department of Education document, “Developing Quality Programs for Pupil Services: A Self-Evaluative Guide” (1999) to ensure that programs and services provided by support services staff are of the highest quality and greatest benefit to the school community.
8. Districts should adopt discipline-specific criteria for evaluating support services specialists, using the competencies and indicators developed by the State Department of Education (see CT State Department of Education, 1993, reprinted in CT State Department of Education, 1999).

The Board believes that implementation of these practices within a comprehensive program of school-based support services will help students to become self-sufficient, healthy, productive, and resilient adults who value themselves and others. By adopting a preventative, whole-child orientation and providing a wide range of interventions, schools will be better equipped to reduce barriers to learning and enhance healthy development.

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Appendix B

Examples of Diverse School Psychology Practice in Connecticut

A number of Connecticut school districts have well-developed school psychology programs that apply the practices recommended in these guidelines. Each example is followed by a reference to the domains described in the Scope of Practice section.

In **Stamford**, school psychologists are involved in a variety of activities. They have developed individual, classroom and schoolwide behavior management programs; facilitated classroom groups on anger management, conflict resolution and social skills; provided crisis intervention; and conducted consultation with parents and teachers. In addition, they have used assessment information to direct instruction and develop programs. For example, an elementary school psychologist has trained educational aides to deliver targeted instruction to kindergarten students based on academic screening results, and another has designed an intervention program for kindergarten students that is based on *the Lindamood Sequencing Program*. A school psychologist at the middle school normed oral reading fluency and written expression measures, is using the norms in ongoing evaluations, and is beginning to use curriculum-based measurement to show students' growth. *[Domains I- X]*

In **Westport**, a low student-to-school psychologist ratio supports the delivery of a full range of school psychological services, including problem-centered counseling, classroom-based interventions, assessment, professional development, crisis intervention, parenting workshops, early intervention and prevention services, and consultation to parents, teachers and administrators. In addition, school psychologists are offered a comprehensive menu of supervision alternatives ranging from individual to small group to large group supervision. The Pupil Services Unit has mission and vision statements that emphasize the goal for *all* children to have access to comprehensive pupil services. Provision of these services is one of the reasons special education identification rates have significantly decreased. *[Domains I- X]*

School psychologists are involved in family-school collaboration programs of different complexity in a number of districts.

In **Wethersfield**, the school psychologists and other school mental health professionals developed a districtwide parent group to help meet the many diverse needs of Wethersfield families. School psychologists have led presentations on topics such as stress management, nutrition, anger management and discipline. Collaborations with Parent-Teacher Organizations, local businesses and school social workers have strengthened this program. *[Domains I- X]*

In **Bridgeport**, school psychologists staff six Family Solution Centers around the city, with five school psychologists each providing family counseling one day a week. Using a solution-focused approach, 120 families have been seen and 579 family sessions held in the course of a year. Feedback for the program has been positive; families have reported success in managing their children at home, and teachers have reported improvements at school. *[Domains II, IV, VII and VIII]*

Many school districts use school psychologists on a variety of primary and secondary prevention teams, where they collaborate with other professionals to impact the entire school community.

New Canaan's school psychologists participate on school safety and crisis teams, instructional leadership teams, child study teams, and curriculum review committees. They take on a variety of leadership roles; for example, one school psychologist oversees the development and implementation of the district's innovative approach to teacher evaluation and development. The system is based on professional growth plans and learner-centered goals, which are evaluated by quantitative and qualitative measures. The school psychologist administers the program and conducts professional development programs and individual teacher consultations regarding establishing appropriate goals and methods for measuring outcomes. *[Domains I-XI]*

School psychologists in many districts conduct a variety of classroom-based counseling programs in an effort to deliver prevention services to all students.

In **East Lyme**, secondary-level school psychologists collaborate with other staff to offer a high school orientation program —“Freshman Academy,” in which school psychologists present lessons on stress reduction skills and supervise community service projects. Also, they assist in child development and health education classes by teaching about mental health topics, and provide support for inclusion of students with emotional or behavioral disorders by co-leading a daily morning meeting. At the elementary level, school psychologists promote a positive school environment and interpersonal relations for all students by participating in, and evaluating the effectiveness of, the Responsive Classroom program. “Time-shifting” some special education assessments to summer months has enabled school psychologists to provide a broader range of services during the school year. *[Domains I, II, III, IV,V,VII]*

In **Coventry**, school psychologists deliver the *Second Step* program to all classes in Grades 1 and 2. *Second Step* is an empirically supported social skills and violence prevention program. *[Domains IV and VII]*

New London school psychologists and other school mental health professionals at one elementary school provide whole classroom lessons and activities to all K-5 students. Topics of the lessons include bullying prevention, disability awareness, anger management and social skills. *[Domains IV,V and VII]*

In **Preston**, the school psychologist has introduced the *I Can Problem Solve* program, an empirically supported intervention that teaches students social problem-solving skills. Another program teaches seventh graders with special needs about learning disabilities and the brain. The school psychologist also writes a monthly column for the local paper and offers parenting groups during school and evening hours. *[Domains III, IV,V and VIII]*

In **Branford**, a school psychologist collaborates with a high school teacher to co-teach a segment of an Abnormal Psychology class. *[Domains II, III and VII]*

School psychologists are delivering a number of innovative health-related programs to foster wellness and to support at-risk populations before problems become more serious and more difficult to address.

The school psychologist at a **Waterbury** high school has implemented several such programs. Among these are a highly attended and successful stop-smoking clinic, a pregnancy group for both mothers and fathers (co-led with the school social worker), and presentations to students in the psychology classes about the different professions in psychology. *[Domains II, III, IV, VII and VIII]*

Ridgefield school psychologists support the *LIFE* program at the high school, which is designed to meet the emotional and educational needs of students who are transitioning back to school from hospitalization, residential placement, day treatment or drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. *[Domains II, III, IV, VII, VIII]*

In **Region 8**, the school psychologist offers students, who are facing disciplinary action for smoking for the first or second time, the alternative of participating in an after-school Smokers Clinic and in an intensive abstinence-enforcing intervention. *[Domain VII]*

Appendix C

Sample Supervisor Evaluation Form Based on Proposed NASP Standards

1. The supervisor . . .	Almost Always			Almost Never
1a. Effectively supervises the overall development and implementation of district school psychological services.				
1b. Articulates school psychological service programs to others in the school/district and constituent groups.				
1c. Provides leadership by promoting innovative service delivery systems that reflect best practices in the field of school psychology.				
1d. Leads the school psychology services unit in developing, implementing and evaluating a coordinated plan for accountability and evaluation of all services.				
1e. Uses measurable objectives in both programs and individual performance evaluations.				
1f. Conducts program and individual performance evaluations that are both formative and summative.				
1g. Evaluates and revises evaluation plans on a regular basis through the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of process and performance data.				
2. The supervisor provides supervision . . .				
2a. At an level adequate to ensure the provision of effective and accountable services.				
2b. Through an ongoing, positive, systematic, collaborative process.				
2c. That focuses on promoting professional growth and exemplary professional practice.				
2d. For interns and first-year school psychologists on at least a weekly basis, in a face-to-face format.				
2e. Within the guidelines of the training institution and NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology.				
3. The supervisor provides professional leadership . . .				
3a. Through participation in school psychology professional organizations.				
3b. By coordinating the activities of the school psychological services unit with other student support services units.				
3c. Through active involvement in local, state and federal public policy development and federal, state, and local educational organizations.				
4. The supervisor's credentials include . . .				
4a. State certification as a school psychologist.				
4b. Certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP).				
4c. A minimum of two years of experience as a practicing school psychologist.				
4d. Training and/or experience in the supervision of school personnel.				

Appendix D

Leadership Behavior Rating Scale

The supervisor of school psychologists:	Con- stantly			Never
1. Brings concerns to staff school psychologists and facilitates collaborative problem solving by participating in group discussions and sharing necessary information.				
2. Delegates tasks and authority effectively and fairly.				
3. Openly discusses his or her vision for the school psychological services.				
4. Encourages staff school psychologists to share expertise with others and function in leadership roles.				
5. Encourages staff members to reflect on current practices and suggest improvements.				
6. Treats staff school psychologists as self-directed professionals who share professional standards.				
7. Meets frequently with staff members, both formally and informally.				
8. Shares budget construction, resource management, and program evaluation with staff school psychologists.				

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