Standards for School Psychologists

School Psychology in Education

Psychology provides an important knowledge and disciplinary base for educational procedures. School psychologists are a primary source for translation of psychological knowledge to school practice. Professional school psychologists are trained in human development and behavior and in the processes of learning, socialization, and adaptation. Much of the knowledge base for the practice of school psychology provides an empirical basis for educational practice.

School psychology training is delivered within a context of program values and clearly articulated training philosophy/mission, goals, and objectives. Training includes a comprehensive, integrated program of study delivered by qualified faculty, as well as substantial supervised field experiences necessary for the preparation of competent school psychologists whose services positively impact children, youth, families, and other consumers.

Preparation

School psychology licensure requires a graduate-level degree with training in both psychology and education. Programs are designed to achieve explicitly stated competencies based upon the goals of professional practice in applied settings, and include substantial supervised practica and internship experiences as part of the planned program of study. Training programs in school psychology prepare individuals at the specialist (minimum of 60 credits) or doctoral (minimum of 90 credits) levels for employment in school systems or agencies providing services to school-aged children and their families.

Areas of training in school psychology include:
- Data-Based Decision-Making and Accountability
- Consultation and Collaboration
- Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills
- Socialization and Development of Life Skills
- Student Diversity in Development and Learning
- School Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate
- Prevention, Crisis Management, and Mental Health
- Home/School/Community Collaboration
- Research and Program Evaluation
- School Psychology Practice and Development
- Information Technology

Emphasis on specific areas of training varies among university programs.

Training programs include practica experiences appropriate to the specific training objectives of the program. Practica experiences are distinct from and occur prior to the internship. Both specialist and doctoral level programs include an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive internship. The internship consists of a minimum of 1200 clock hours at the specialist level and a minimum of 1500 clock hours at the doctoral level. At least 600 hours occurs in a school setting.

Programs are generally housed in Departments of Education or Psychology, are titled School Psychology, and are clearly identifiable as unique organizational units. It is expected that programs are supported at a level consistent with that provided to comparable units within the university.

Courses at the specialist and doctoral levels are offered within a planned, supervised, and integrated program of study. The curriculum clearly differentiates the level of preparation for doctoral study as being advanced in breadth and/or depth beyond that for the specialist level of study. Doctoral training may also include specialized areas of focus or skill development.

Students successfully completing a State-approved university training program in school psychology are eligible for licensure by the North Carolina Psychology Board as a Licensed Psychological Associate or Licensed Psychologist and for licensure by NCDPI at the specialist or doctoral levels. If the training program is approved by NASP, graduates are automatically qualified to apply for certification by the

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National School Psychology Certification Board. The NCSP credential is awarded pending the submission of a score on the ETS/NTE Praxis II school psychology exam that is at or above the national criterion.

**Competencies of School Psychology: Training and Practice**

The professional development of school psychology candidates in North Carolina must reflect the best thinking of the nation’s educators. Therefore, the standards for North Carolina initial and continuing licensure have been aligned with the standards developed by NASP (Standards for Training & Field Placement Programs in School Psychology, 2000).

School psychology candidates demonstrate entry-level competency in each of NASP’s 11 standards of professional practice. Competency requires both knowledge and skills. School psychology programs ensure that candidates have a foundation in the knowledge base for psychology and education, including theories, models, empirical findings, and techniques under each standard. School psychology programs ensure that candidates demonstrate the professional skills necessary to deliver effective services that result in positive outcomes under each standard. The standards that follow are not mutually exclusive and should be fully integrated into graduate level curricula, practica, and internship. Sample indicators are provided below to illustrate how programs can demonstrate how they enact the standards. Programs should select from the indicators listed, and provide additional indicators, in ways consistent with their program mission, resources and character.
Standards for School Psychologists (SP)

**Standard 1: Data-Based Decision-Making and Accountability**

The competent SP has knowledge of varied models and methods of assessment that yield information useful in identifying strengths and needs, in understanding problems, and in measuring progress to collect data and other information, translate assessment results into empirically-based decisions about service delivery, and evaluate the outcomes of services. Data-based decision-making permeates every aspect of professional practice.

School Psychologists

Indicator 1 understand effective data-based decision-making and problem-solving processes.

Indicator 2 understand the purposes, characteristics, strengths, and limitations of formal and informal models and methods of assessment.

Indicator 3 understand child development, learning theory, and diversity as well as their relationship to data-based decision-making.

Indicator 4 understand nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures.

Indicator 5 understand the process of linking assessment results with the development, evaluation, and modification of interventions.

Indicator 6 understand the use of data in determining areas of exceptionality as defined in federal and state statutes.

Indicator 7 understand the principles and importance of professional accountability for confidentiality and record keeping.

Indicator 8 apply knowledge of child development, learning theory, diversity, and the relationship of curriculum to data-based decision making.

Indicator 9 collect assessment results and other environmental data to identify student learning needs, establish goals, align and modify curriculum and instruction, and design intervention strategies.

Indicator 10 evaluate psychometric properties when selecting assessment methods and instruments.

Indicator 11 use nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures.

Indicator 12 prepare clearly written reports that address referral questions appropriately.

Indicator 13 follow legal, regulatory, and ethical parameters in data-based decision-making and record-keeping.
Standard 2: Consultation and Collaboration

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of behavioral, mental health, collaborative, and/or other consultation models and methods and of their applications to particular situations. The competent school psychologist collaborates effectively with others in planning and decision-making processes at the individual, group, and system level.

School Psychologists:

Indicator 1 understand behavioral, mental health, collaborative, and other consultative approaches and their application to particular situations.

Indicator 2 understand the dynamics of communication applicable to collaboration and consultation in professional practice.

Indicator 3 understand skills necessary to facilitate communication among teams of school personnel.

Indicator 4 understand the important features of collaboration with individuals of diverse cultures, values, and experiences.

Indicator 5 understand technological tools for accessing, managing, and disseminating information to enhance the consultative process.

Indicator 6 use skills in consultation and collaboration to promote change at the individual, classroom, building, district, and/or other agency levels.

Indicator 7 participate in collaborative decision making and problem solving with other professionals to achieve student success.

Indicator 8 demonstrate positive interpersonal skills in difficult situations through use of active listening, conflict resolution and group facilitation skills.

Indicator 9 promote and model ethical practices of confidential communication with others.

Standard 3: Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of human learning processes, techniques to assess these processes, and of direct and indirect services, including instructional interventions and consultation, applicable to the development of cognitive and academic skills. The competent school psychologist, in collaboration with others, develops appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implements interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluates the effectiveness of the implemented interventions.
School Psychologists:

Indicator 1  understand theories of cognitive development, learning, and teaching and their application to the development of instructional strategies.

Indicator 2  understand individual differences in approaches to learning and performance and the unique instructional needs of students with diverse abilities.

Indicator 3  understand language development, including second language acquisition, communication styles, and the role of communication in learning.

Indicator 4  understand the importance of aligning instruction with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and related objectives.

Indicator 5  work effectively with school personnel to promote supportive learning environments.

Indicator 6  use assessment data to identify students’ learning needs, and to develop appropriate interventions for students at all stages of development and from diverse backgrounds.

Indicator 7  monitor, evaluate, and adjust interventions in response to data.

Standard 4: Socialization and Development of Life Skills

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of human developmental processes and techniques for assessing these processes and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of behavioral, affective, adaptive, and social goals for students of varying abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implements interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to, consultation, behavioral assessment/intervention, and counseling.

School Psychologists:

Indicator 1  understand the developmental processes involved in the behavioral, social, affective, and adaptive domains.

Indicator 2  understand consultation, behavior management, and counseling strategies as they apply to the enhancement of student behavior.

Indicator 3  understand how to use assessment information to address students’ behavioral, affective, adaptive, social, and academic needs.

Indicator 4  understand how communication, behavior, culture, and the environment affect socialization.

Indicator 5  apply the principles of behavior change through the provision of consultation, behavioral assessment and intervention, and counseling services to meet students’ needs in the cognitive, social, emotional, adaptive, and physical domains.

Indicator 6  provide leadership in creating environments for students that promote respect, dignity, foster the expression of pro-social behavior, and reduce alienation.

Indicator 7  facilitate the implementation of classroom management strategies that promote optimal instructional environments, and students’ academic learning time.
Indicator 8 develop intervention programs to facilitate successful transitions of students from one environment to another (e.g., program to program, early childhood to school, school to work).

**Standard 5: Student Diversity in Development and Learning**

The competent school psychologist understands individual differences, abilities, and disabilities and the potential influence of biological, social, cultural, ethnic, experiential, socioeconomic, gender-related and linguistic factors in development and learning. The competent school psychologist demonstrates the sensitivity and skills needed to work with individuals with diverse characteristics and to implement strategies selected and/or adapted based on individual characteristics, strengths, and needs.

**School Psychologists:**

Indicator 1 understand their own cultural perspectives and biases and the impact of these biases on interactions with others.

Indicator 2 understand how individual experiences, talents, disabilities, gender, prior learning, language, culture, family, religion, and community values influence students' development, learning, and behavior.

Indicator 3 understand the impact of second language acquisition on student learning.

Indicator 4 understand the importance of professional practices that are consistent with ethical standards when dealing with students from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Indicator 5 demonstrate sensitivity and the skills needed to work with families, students, and staff with diverse characteristics.

Indicator 6 develop strategies for promoting an understanding of the role of cultural barriers in educational outcomes.

Indicator 7 incorporate information about students, families, cultures, and communities in assessments, interventions, and evaluations of progress.

**Standard 6: School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate**

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of general education, special education, and other educational and related services. The competent school psychologist understands schools and other settings as systems. The competent school psychologist works with individuals and groups to facilitate policies and practices that create and maintain safe, supportive, and effective learning environments for children and others.

**School Psychologists:**

Indicator 1 understand the organization and operation of school systems.

Indicator 2 understand effective principles of systems theory (e.g., organization development).

Indicator 3 understand the importance of policies and policy development processes in school systems and agencies.
Indicator 4  understand factors that contribute to safe, caring, supportive, and effective learning environments.

Indicator 5  promote learning, prevention, and intervention by helping to create climates that foster mutual respect and support for students and their families/guardians.

Indicator 6  assist in the development and evaluation of policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that all schools are safe.

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**Standard 7: Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health**

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of human development and psychopathology and of associated biological, cultural, and social influences on human behavior. The competent school psychologist provides or contributes to prevention and intervention programs that promote the mental health and physical well-being of students.

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**School Psychologists:**

Indicator 1  understand factors influencing atypical development and behavior of children and adolescents.

Indicator 2  understand crises in schools and communities and how they affect student behavior.

Indicator 3  understand effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Indicator 4  understand physical and mental health conditions of children and adolescents (e.g., diet, eating disorders, teenage pregnancy, AIDS prevention, and stress management).

Indicator 5  understand how to access and make appropriate referrals for services provided by the district, community, and state agencies.

Indicator 6  understand that medications can affect the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional functioning of students.

Indicator 7  understand the appropriate use of confidentiality in prevention, crisis intervention, and mental health services.

Indicator 8  develop, implement, and evaluate programs based on identification of precursors of children’s learning and behavioral problems.

Indicator 9  collaborate with other school personnel, parents/guardians and members of the community, in the aftermath of crisis (e.g., death, natural disasters, bombs or bomb threats, violence, and sexual harassment).

Indicator 10 collaborate with other health care professionals to promote behaviors that encourage mental health and physical well-being.

Indicator 11 assist students, their families/guardians, educators, and others to access school and community resources.
**Standard 8: Home/School/Community Collaboration**

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of family systems, including family strengths and influences on student development, learning, and behavior, and of methods to involve families in education and service delivery. The competent school psychologist works effectively with families, educators, and others in the community to promote and provide comprehensive services to children and families.

**School Psychologists:**

Indicator 1 understand how family systems affect a student’s cognitive, motivational, social, and academic functioning.

Indicator 2 understand methods of promoting collaboration and partnerships between families/guardians and educators that improve outcomes for students.

Indicator 3 have knowledge of school and community resources available to students and families/guardians.

Indicator 4 design, implement, monitor, and evaluate interventions that promote school, family, and/or community partnerships and enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for students.

Indicator 5 educate school and community members regarding the importance of family involvement in school governance.

Indicator 6 identify appropriate resources and coordinates services when programming for children involves multiple agencies.

**Standard 9: Research and Program Evaluation**

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods. School psychologists evaluate research; translate research into practice; and understand research design and statistics in sufficient depth to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of services.

**School Psychologists:**

Indicator 1 understand experimental design and methods in order to conduct research and evaluation.

Indicator 2 understand research and statistics in order to evaluate published research.

Indicator 3 understand measurement principles and methods when selecting and using assessment techniques and published instruments in program or systems-level evaluation.

Indicator 4 use findings from intervention research when designing educational, mental health, or treatment programs for children.

Indicator 5 provide information about relevant research findings to school personnel, parents, and the public.
Standard 10: School Psychology Practice and Development

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of the history and foundations of the profession; of various service models and methods; of public policy development applicable to services to children and families; and of ethical, professional, and legal standards. The competent school psychologist practices in ways that are consistent with applicable standards, is involved in the profession, and has the knowledge and skills needed to acquire career-long professional development.

School Psychologists:

Indicator 1 understand professional, ethical, and legal standards in order to enhance the quality of services and to protect the rights of all parties.

Indicator 2 understand the standards, models, methods, and practices of the profession.

Indicator 3 understand the history and foundations of school psychology.

Indicator 4 understand the importance of professional organizations and continuing education in professional development.

Indicator 5 provide school psychological services consistent with the legal, ethical, and professional standards.

Indicator 6 maintain useful and accurate records and communicate information responsibly to families/guardians, students, colleagues, and community members as appropriate.

Standard 11: Information Technology

The competent school psychologist has knowledge of relevant informational sources and technology; and accesses, evaluates, and uses informational sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of services.

School Psychologists:

Indicator 1 understand how to review, evaluate, and use technology for educational purposes.

Indicator 2 have knowledge about technological resources for children.

Indicator 3 understand the limitations of technology in professional practice.

Indicator 4 use technology appropriately to conduct and improve professional practice.

Indicator 5 use multimedia resources to support and deliver oral presentations.
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