

State of School Psychology In Arizona

Presentation to Special Education
Advisory Panel

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Arizona Association
of School Psychologists

Who Are School Psychologists?

- What is a School Psychologist?
- What services do they provide?
- How can they help my child and school?

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS
support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach.

THEY ARE EXPERTS IN

- Learning
- Behavior
- Mental Health
- School Systems

THEY PROVIDE

- Academic and behavioral interventions
- Mental health supports
- Evaluation, assessment, and data analysis
- Consultation with teachers and families
- Culturally responsive services
- Crisis prevention and response

THEY SUPPORT

- Struggling and diverse learners
- Academic achievement
- Positive behavior and mental health
- Safe and supportive learning environments
- School-family-community partnerships
- School-wide data-based decision making

THEY SERVE IN

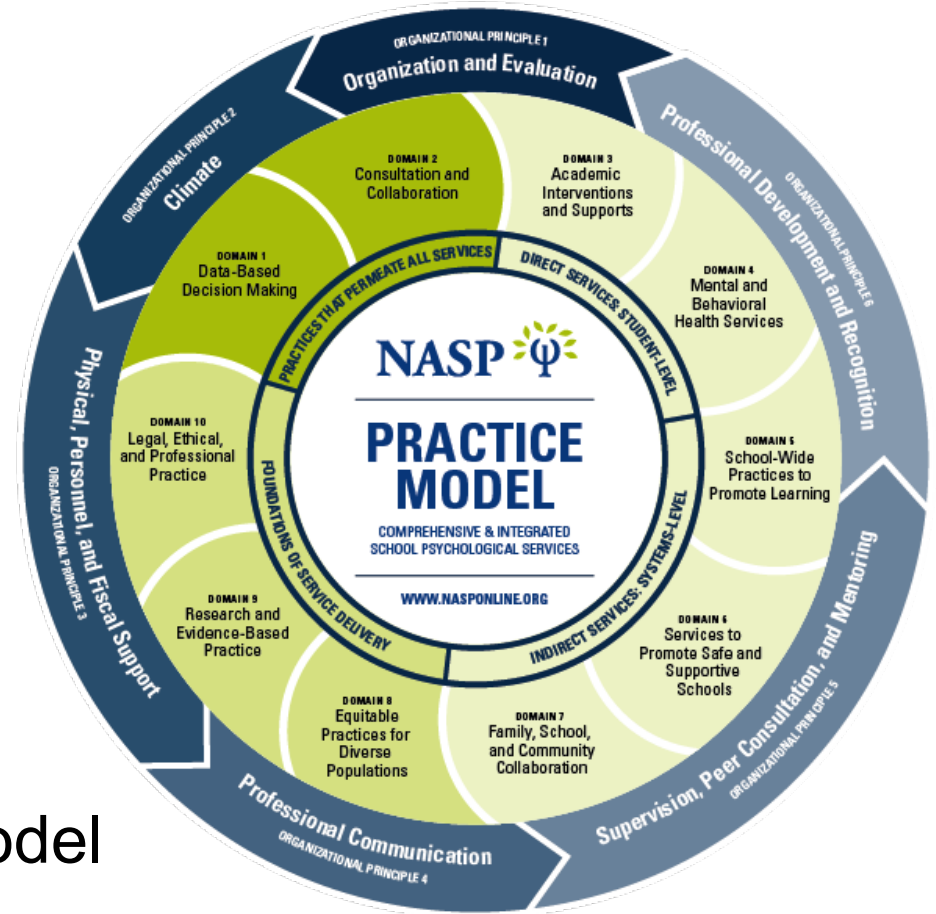
- Public and private schools
- Early childhood centers
- Universities
- Juvenile justice facilities
- Clinics and hospitals
- Independent practice

RECOMMENDED RATIO
1 school psychologist per 500 students

Lowering barriers to learning is critical to children's success in school.
Contact your school psychologist to find out how they can help.

School Psychologists:
Helping Children Thrive • In School • At Home • In Life
www.nasponline.org

NASP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
School Psychologists



NASP Practice Model



School Mental Health Professionals

School Mental Health Professionals in Arizona

School mental health professionals are necessary to provide school-based physical, social, emotional, and mental health prevention, intervention, transition, and follow-up services for all students. These personnel include school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, school nurses, and partner community mental health providers.



School Psychologists

School psychologists partner with school staff and families to support mental health and learning which helps students succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. Some school psychologist best practices include: data based decision making, academic interventions and instructional supports, services to promote safe and supportive schools, practices to address the needs of diverse student populations, and comprehensive student evaluations to determine special education eligibility and services.



School Nurses (RN)

School nurses support student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all students. They address the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and support their achievement in the learning process. School nurses also support medically fragile populations with the development, implementation, and monitoring of individual service plans and emergency action plans. School Nurses also engage in emergency preparedness planning and activities.



School Social Workers

School social workers work to remove social, emotional, behavioral, and environmental barriers to learning. School social workers provide direct and indirect services to students, families, and schools including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention and risk assessments, consultation and professional development, program coordination, and advocacy and assistance in accessing community resources. School social workers are the link between the home, school and community.



School Counselors

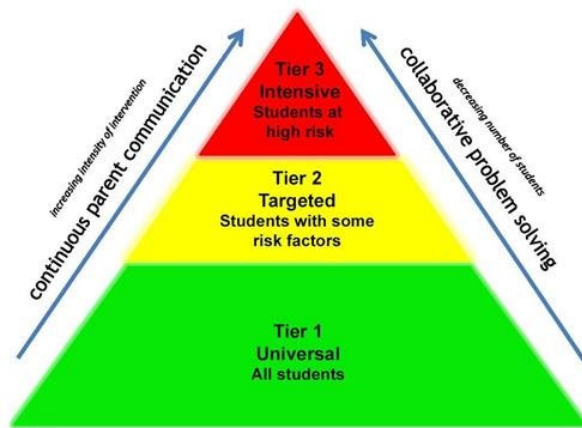
School counselors interact with and support all students through developmentally appropriate lessons and activities. School counselors assist students in applying academic achievement strategies, help students develop and practice strategies to manage emotions, and apply interpersonal skills as well as plan for postsecondary options after students graduate. The foundation of a comprehensive school counseling program is the direct student services provided through whole group instruction. School counselors are also integral in crisis response and intervention for students who are in need of support.



Community Providers

When partnered with school districts, community behavioral health providers provide crisis counseling and recovery, on campus large scale prevention services, and treatment for chronic mental health needs, evaluation, consultation, case management, etc.





Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)



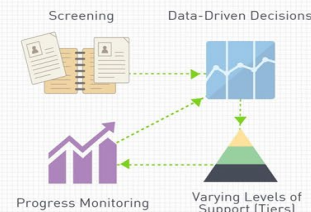
MTSS is an evidence-based framework for effectively integrating multiple systems and services to simultaneously address students' academic achievement, behavior, and social-emotional well-being.

Benefits of MTSS

- Improves learning outcomes for all students
- Enhances instruction and alignment of curricula across general and special education
- Fosters school climate and safe learning environments
- Prevents unnecessary special education evaluations through problem solving
- Supports students' mental and behavioral health
- Facilitates effective discipline policies and practices
- Provides a framework to facilitate collaboration and effective use of resources



Components of MTSS



School Psychologist's Expertise

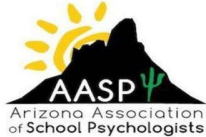
School psychologists can work with school leaders in the following ways:

- Design, implement, and evaluate interventions
- Create safe and supportive school environments through collaboration and consultation
- Identify and collect relevant data to support school and district decision-making
- Collaborate with parents and families to improve intervention success at home and school



School Psychologist Shortages

With an insufficient number of school psychologists in the state, our students potentially face great challenges without adequate support.




Arizona Association of School Psychologists


School Psychology Staffing Shortages

Ratio of School Psychologists per General Education Students

Nationally Recommended Ratio
1:500



Arizona's Ratio
1:1320



1 in 5 youth (3-17) experience a behavioral, emotional, developmental, or mental health disorder
75%-80% of youth go without needed mental health supports
Most youth receive mental health services at school

31.1% of Arizona's youth (0-17) and 44.4% (12-17) experience 2 or more adverse childhood experiences	1 out of 15 high school students attempt suicide each year
25% of Arizona's students do not graduate high school	1 in 5 Students in Arizona are bullied (cyber, verbal, physical, and/or social)

For more information and data sources:
www.AASP-az.org/AASP-Resources



School Psychology Workforce Survey (Data collected in 2021)

- **Only 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their job as a school psychologist**
- **21% of respondents would not recommend school psychologists move to Arizona**
- **Almost 67% of respondents indicated that the workload/caseload for school psychologists was too high**
- **81% of respondents indicated that they experience moderate to high levels of stress during the school year**



Sources of Stress Identified on School Psychology Workforce Survey

- **Caseload: 65%**
- **“Too much on my plate”: 49%**
- **Working in the evening and on weekends: 42%**



Other Contributing Factors and Increased Demands

- **ESA Evaluations**
- **Private Schools**
- **Sharp spike in behavioral and emotional challenges**
- **Increase in students coming to kindergarten with unidentified needs**
- **Impact often greater in smaller or rural districts**



Impact of Shortages

- **School Psychologist role reduced to attempting to meet basic legal requirements**
- **Increased job dissatisfaction**
- **Unmet mental health and behavioral needs at a time when those needs are greater than ever**
- **Increased levels of stress and burnout**
- **Increased number of complaints and use of advocates due to parent frustration**



Some District Efforts to Address Shortages

- **Create Diagnostician Positions**
- **Use Interns to fill Open Positions**
- **Remote/Virtual School Psychologists**
- **Contract School Psychologists**
- **Use of Graduate Students to Complete Testing**
- **Larger Assignments for Existing School Psychologists**



Challenges with Remote/Virtual Psychs

- **Only available for a small portion of the role**
- **Frequently not invested in the district as they are often located in other states or even other countries**
- **Frequently never interact directly with children, yet are member of team making very impactful decisions**
- **Often working in multiple districts at once, which can lead to confusion**

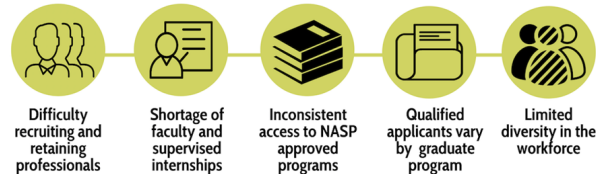


The causes of shortages – and thus potential solutions – are multifaceted and complex

Shortages in School Psychology

Inadequate access to school psychologists significantly undermines the availability of high quality services to students, families, and schools.

Multiple Factors Contribute



Strategies That Work

- Partnerships among universities, SEA's, LEAs, and state professional organizations
- Research on workforce supply and demand
- Targeted outreach and recruitment
- Enabling school psychologists to perform their role as articulated in the NASP Practice Model
- Mentoring and professional development



NASP's Initiatives

For school systems and practitioners:

- Resource and implementation guides
- Mentor program
- Career center
- Professional development



For universities and graduate educators:

- School-candidate match program
- Recruitment materials
- Research summaries
- Distance education guidance



Training Program Needs

- **Not enough students are graduating each year, which contributes to shortages**
- **Training programs do not have capacity to admit many more students (not enough funding for faculty positions)**
- **Lack of any real funding support for graduate students (particularly at the EdS level)**
- **District partners must be willing/able to provide sites for practicum and internship**



Suggestions for Districts To Help Retain School Psychologists

- **Competitive salary**
- **Clerical support**
- **Funding and professional leave to attend conferences**
- **Meaningful professional development within the district (i.e., not the same professional development teachers receive)**
- **Provide opportunities for advancement or leadership, such as supervising practicum or internship students, serving on district councils/committees, or becoming mentors or lead psychologists**

SOCIAL MEDIA



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