



## **RECOMMENDATION TO SUNSET COMMISSION**

### **1. Rename licensure from "Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP)" to "School Psychologist"**

#### **Background**

In 1995, the Texas Education Code was revised to require professionals (e.g., school psychologists, speech and language pathologists) previously certified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), to hold a professional license to practice in the public schools. The Legislature adopted the LSSP as the credential required to offer the full range of school psychological services within the public schools. The Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP) was named as the regulatory agency for the LSSP. The Revised Texas Education Code required that the LSSP be modeled after national training standards. TSBEP reviewed the training standards from both the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American Psychological Association (APA) and chose to adopt the NASP training standards as the model for the LSSP. Approximately 3000 professionals have obtained the LSSP since its inception. In addition, the Texas Education Code has already codified the term "school psychologists," providing guidance to school districts on hiring these individuals. "A person may not be employed by a district as a school psychologist unless this person is licensed by the state agency that licenses that profession."

#### **Applicable Current State/Federal Law**

- Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 501.260
- Texas Administrative Code Title 22, Part 21, Chapter 465
- Texas Education Code 21.003(b)

#### **How Issue is Addressed in Other States**

47 of the 50 states with the same credentials/level of training allow for the title of "School Psychologist". Exceptions: Texas and Louisiana-"Licensed Specialist in School Psychology" and Arkansas "School Psychology Specialist"

#### **Benefit to the Community**

TASP continues to support the TSBEP decision to use the National Association of School Psychologists professional standards as the model for the LSSP. However, the TSBEP rules and regulations are not consistent with current training standards. The NASP training standards allow for the use of the title "school psychologist" for those professionals who meet the NASP training standards. The title LSSP is confusing to the public and is not descriptive of who we are as professionals. Past surveys of our membership indicated overwhelmingly in favor of a name change, primarily due to 'a lack of understanding of what an LSSP is' by the general public. With the creation of the LSSP, the entry-level training standards were significantly elevated which has improved the quality of services provided to the state's public school children, their parents, and teachers.

#### **Financial Cost to the State**

None



**Suggested Statute Language**

Replace all mentions of "Licensed Specialist in School Psychology" with "School Psychologist" in Chapter 501 of the Occupations Code and in the Texas Administrative Code Title 22, Part 21.

**Sec. 501.002. DEFINITIONS.** In this chapter:

- (2) "School psychologist" means a person who holds a license to engage in the practice of psychology under Section 501.260.

**Sec. 501.260. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST.**

(a) The board by rule shall issue a license to a school psychologist. A license issued under this section constitutes the appropriate credential for a person who provides psychological services as required by Section 21.003(b), Education Code.

(a-1) "School psychologist" means a professional licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychology as a school psychologist who provides school psychological services consistent with the national standards articulated by the most current Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services as published by the National Association of School Psychologists. "School psychologist" includes a school psychologist - doctoral and a school psychologist - specialist.

(a-2) "School psychologist - doctoral" means a professional who meets the qualifications established in subsection a-2 and holds a doctoral degree in psychology or a related field.

(a-3) "School psychologist - specialist" means a professional who meets the qualifications established in subsection 3 and holds a master's degree or specialist-level degree.

(d) Persons licensed under this section may hold themselves out as school psychologists but must include the word "school" in the designation, or as nationally certified school psychologists if they hold the credentials as designated by the National Association of School Psychologists or a successor organization. Persons licensed under this section may not hold themselves out as psychologists, psychological examiners or any business name incorporating variations of those titles other than school psychologists or nationally certified school psychologists unless they are appropriately licensed.