



The Texas School Psychologist

*A partner on the path to student success*

Texas Association of School Psychologists

www.txasp.org

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Spring 2013

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## President's Message

Why am I doing this?

Does anyone really ap-

preciate, or even ac-

knowledge my hard work and ef-

fort? Is it worth it? If you have

asked yourself any of these ques-

tions, you will want to follow the

activities of TASP this year. Help

us, help you!

*Dana Goins, President*

It was a privilege to be at the NASP

convention representing the amaz-

ing group of LSSPs from Texas.

The meetings and workshops I at-

tended were informative, enlighten-

ing and inspiring. If you have not

attended a NASP convention, I

highly recommend it. There were

over 4,700 school psychologists in

Seattle this year. When you speak

to school psychologists from other

states, you quickly realize how dif-

ferent we do things in Texas. Big

surprise, right? The pressing issues

facing school psychologists in

many other states are layoffs due to

budget cuts, being an approved

mental health care provider for

Medicaid (with further implications

for job security), and personnel

evaluations for school psycholo-

gists. Although we share some of

the same concerns as our fellow

school psychologists across the

country, in Texas, we have a short-

age of LSSPs across the state, we

are currently approved providers for

Medicaid and while certainly

relevant, per-

sonnel evalua-

tion concerns

have not been

expressed as a major concern by

TASP members.

Of course, school safety is at the fore-

front of most discussions on the fed-

eral as well as state level. NASP is a

truly valuable resource for school

psychologists. You are encouraged to

join, but NASP offers many free pub-

lications and tools to nonmembers.

In the aftermath of the horrible trag-

edy at Sandy Hook Elementary,

NASP has compiled several docu-

ments and resources that, if you have

not already done so, you should share

with your co-workers, administrators,

school boards and parents.

We have include recent statements

and publications released by NASP

related to school safety in this news-

letter.

So why ARE you a school psycholo-

gist? I know many of us were re-

minded exactly why by the actions of

Mary Shurlach, the school psycholo-

gist at Sandy Hook, who bravely ran





Happy New Year TASP Members! With the beginning of the New Year, TASP board members voted to approve the budget for 2013. Hours were spent discussing how TASP will be able to sustain itself past 2016, if we continue to see a decline in revenues. Ideas to increase revenue included a membership drive, as well as, increasing participants at the Annual Conference and at the Summer Institute. We also discussed ways to decrease spending without affecting the quality of our conference. I look forward to seeing you at the Summer Institute in June.

Jennifer Langley, Treasurer-Elect

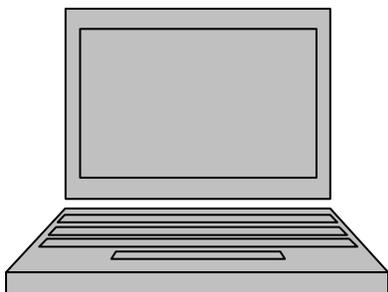


Hello TASP Members!

We're excited to establish a Technology Task Force this year that I will be overseeing, which will deal with social media websites and conference technology. At this time of year, I'm sure that many of you are finding PLENTY to keep you busy. However, if you ever get some "free time" and find yourself browsing Facebook or tweeting on Twitter, make sure to 'like' our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TXASP> and follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/TxASP!!!> I'm hoping to draw a larger crowd and make more connections through our social media aspect. If you think of people that might be interested in keeping up with TASP, just send them a link! Oh, and by the way... I'm fairly new to Twitter, so bear with me as I gracefully fumble my way into that!

Now the question is, what am I going to post?! I have some ideas already in mind, such as psychology facts and quotes, relevant news stories, resources for practitioners, and (of course) updates about upcoming conferences; however, I want to make sure that we're covering the wants and needs of our "fan base," so I want to hear from you guys! Is there a topic of interest that you would like to hear about? Do you have a stellar resource you've found to be useful that you'd like to share with others in the profession? If so, please let me know! Feel free to shoot me an e-mail at [amanda.meyer@nisd.net](mailto:amanda.meyer@nisd.net) to share comments, concerns, posts, etc.

This field is certainly not the easiest to be a part of right now given the current economic status and the impact it has had on education. Our kiddos need us now more than ever! With that said, I know one thing that makes me feel more supported in my position is the input I get from my colleagues and supervisors. My hope is that our social media websites can turn into another type of support for all of our LSSPs and open up a new forum for communicating with others to benefit the profession. Thank you all for your dedication to our profession and continued interest in TASP!



Sincerely,

Amanda Meyer





*A partner on the path to student success*

**Texas Association of School Psychologists**



*The First Annual*

*TASP Summer Institute*

Corpus Christi - June 28-29, 2013

Holiday Inn Downtown- Marina Tower

***Getting It Right!***

An Intensive Institute Examining Current Issues in  
Eligibility, Differential Diagnosis and Assessment

For further information go to [www.txasp.org](http://www.txasp.org) and join TASP on Facebook!

# GRADUATE STUDENT CORNER

Greetings TASP members!

My name is Catie Rodovsky and I am the 2013 TASP Graduate Student Representative. First, I would like to express how honored I am to serve as a link between TASP and school psychology students in Texas! Last month, I had the pleasure of attending my first TASP board meeting and left feeling excited about the future of our profession. We have chosen an incredible career, and together we can see that it continues to grow and improve. My goal is to be a readily available contact for you with any questions, comments, or concerns you have regarding our related interest – School Psychology.

Currently, I am a third year graduate student in the School Psychology Program at Texas State University. I recently began my internship in Bell County and have thoroughly enjoyed applying the knowledge my program has provided me.

This year, I look forward to continuing the successful TASP Scholarship Program, which awarded 4 TASP graduate student members with scholarships last year. Look for future emails from me regarding this opportunity! Additionally, I will be attending the first Summer Institute in Corpus Christi. More information pertaining to this exciting event can be found on the TASP website ([www.txasp.org](http://www.txasp.org)).

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at [rodovskyc@gmail.com](mailto:rodovskyc@gmail.com). I look forward to serving as the Graduate Student Representative and hope to meet you at one of the TASP events this year!



Best regards,

Catie Rodovsky

## Membership News



Hi. My name is Cheri Waggoner and I am the new membership chairperson for the current year. I have been an LSSP since 2003 and have worked in predominantly rural districts. Currently, I am a Visiting Assistant Professor in the

School Psychology program at Texas Woman's University.

I am very excited about working with the board. I hope to make this one of TASP's best years ever by increasing membership. Look for information soon about the

official launch of our membership drive.

# UnMASC Anxiety

## ASSESS

the **RANGE**

and **SEVERITY**

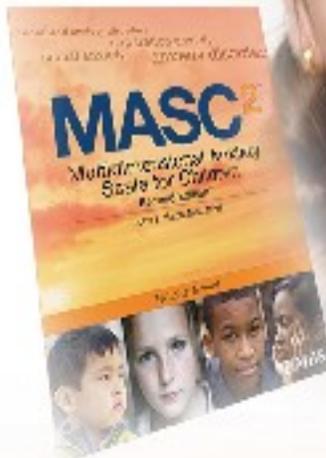
of **SYMPTOMS**

**RELATED** to

**ANXIETY  
DISORDERS**

in **YOUTH**

aged **8 to 19**



**U**nderstanding a child's anxiety is an important step to successful treatment. The **MASC 2™** uncovers important details about emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral symptoms of anxiety that broadband measures and screening tools often miss.

Untreated anxiety can impede social development and educational success, or lead to other impairments. The intervention suggestions, authored by Dr. John March, can be integrated into a treatment plan for monitoring and guiding the youth's progress.



[mhs.com/MASC2](https://mhs.com/MASC2)

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USA Tel: 1.800.456.3003 / CAN Tel: 1.800.268.6011  
[www.mhs.com](https://www.mhs.com) • [customer-service@mhs.com](mailto:customer-service@mhs.com)

## *Legislative Update*

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislative Session is under way. TASP is following a number of bills related to education, mental health and psychological practice. TASP has worked with our legislative liaison, Marty DeLeon, to craft proposed legislation that would ensure that an LSSP is a designated member of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. At this time, the Psychologists' Licensing Act indicates that the make of the TSBEP is:

### SUBCHAPTER B. TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

Sec. 501.051. BOARD MEMBERSHIP. (a) The Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists consists of nine members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate as follows:

(1) four psychologist members who have engaged in independent practice, teaching, or research in psychology for at least five years;

(2) two psychological associate members who have been licensed as psychological associates under this chapter for at least five years; and

(3) three members who represent the public.

(b) To ensure adequate representation on the board of the diverse fields of psychology, the governor in making appointments under Subsection (a)(1) shall appoint:

(1) at least two members who provide psychological services;

(2) at least one member who conducts research in the field of psychology; and

(3) at least one member who teaches as a member of the faculty of a psychological training institution.

(c) Each member of the board must be a citizen of the United States.

(d) Appointments to the board shall be made without regard to the race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national origin of the appointee.

Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 388, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

The current bill that has been filed is HB 646, filed by Representative Diane Patrick of Arlington and is as follows:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

83R4633 SLB-F

By: Patrick

H.B. No. 646

Continued on page 20

President's Message continued from pg 1

toward the sound of trouble, toward a problem to be solved, toward a child she believed may need help. Mary is certainly considered a hero, not only because of her brave actions, but even more so, because of the way she lived. We all have our own reasons why we do what we do, but if the way you live, and work, do not connect with those reasons, then you...and TASP are in the best position to make that change happen.

Do you feel valued? One of my favorite quotes from the NASP convention was by John Kelly, NASP Government and Professional Relations (GPR) chairman. He said, "If you make yourself valuable, you will be valued." Again, I turn to NASP for some helpful tools for you to let others know how valuable you are:

### **What is a School Psychologist?**

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/whatis\\_print.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/whatis_print.pdf)

### **School Psychologists: Providing Mental Health Services to Improve the Lives and Learning of Children and Youth**

<http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/mhbrochure.aspx>

### **School Psychologists: Improving Student and School Outcomes**

[http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/SP\\_Improving\\_Student\\_School\\_Outcomes\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/SP_Improving_Student_School_Outcomes_Final.pdf)

NASP members can access the document titled: Effective Communications-Tips for School Psychologists which clearly outlines the key message areas and advice on how to take a leadership role in communicating the value of school psychologists.

Another poignant statement I heard recently was from Stacy Skalski, the NASP Director of Professional Policy and Practice, "School Psychologists are testing instead of working as leaders to develop a system that does not require so much testing." TASP is working for you, to make more people aware of the value LSSPs bring to the system. TASP is working to improve the system and strengthen our voice. You can do your part by starting in your building. There are over 3000 LSSPs in Texas. We are the fastest growing area of licensure under TSBE. Let's all work together to make each of our voices heard and remembered.

Finally, to answer the last question, "Is it worth it?" Hopefully, you already know the answer, but for me, to be trusted with the choices and decisions that directly impact the lives and well-being of children and families, is not only an honor, it is a blessing.

Whether you are a student, a trainer, a supervisor, or a practitioner, please know that each and every one of you are valued by TASP. We appreciate the support you show through your membership dues and attending the conference. We recognize that you may not realize what your TASP membership does for you. Be assured that every dollar counts and goes toward advocating on the state level (Remember the NCSP?), increasing awareness of the profession, presenting professional development workshops that are specific to Texas and LSSPs, and much, much more. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so today. Help us, help you!

See you at the Summer Institute!  
Dana Goins  
TASP President



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS

## Managing Strong Emotional Reactions to Traumatic Events: Tips for Parents and Teachers

When a large-scale tragedy occurs, it can cause strong and deeply felt reactions in adults and children. ***How adults express their emotions will influence the reactions of children and youth.*** Parents and teachers can help youngsters manage their feelings by both modeling healthy coping strategies themselves and closely monitoring their own emotional state and that of the children in their care.

### Common Reactions to Trauma

It is not uncommon to feel any or all of the following:

- Shock/disbelief
- Fear
- Guilt
- Grief
- Confusion
- Shame/loss
- Anger

These reactions are often closely linked and can be difficult to separate, (e.g., where does grief end and outrage begin). Children, in particular, may have trouble understanding and talking about their feelings. Emotional reactions take place over a period of time and may not happen in any particular order. They can affect our behavior, our ability to function, and our overall sense of well-being. The intensity and ways we express our reactions will vary depending on our personal experience, general mental health, other stress factors in our lives, our coping style, our ability to self-monitor our emotional state, and our support network. This is true for both adults and children. Children of all ages may need guidance and support from the significant adults in their lives (parents, teachers, coaches, etc.) as they work through their thoughts and emotional reactions to the event.

### Anger: A Natural Reaction

For many people, adults and children alike, anger will be a natural extension of other emotions because it is a defensive mechanism that makes us *feel* more in control. As well, anger with the perpetrators of these horrible acts is, in many ways, justified. The desire to “retaliate” can be strong—but quite harmful if not redirected to a positive outlet. In some situations, a significant factor in the expression of anger is the lack of a concrete “enemy” on which to focus our feelings. As long as there is doubt about the identity of the perpetrators and a lack of closure, or when the trauma is a natural disaster, anger and other strong emotions have no specific target. Such situations can lead to more inappropriate expressions. Adults must ensure that children do not “take out” their anger in inappropriate ways, such as lashing out at classmates or neighbors who might be unfairly associated with the perpetrators of violence because of their ethnicity or other affiliations. The key is to direct anger and other strong emotions in socially and psychologically healthy ways.

### Recognizing Anger

The first step in helping children manage their anger is getting your anger under control. Be aware of cues in your own behavior. If necessary, ask someone you trust (a family member, friend or colleague) to give you feedback on your anger reaction. Observe the behavior of other adults around you and your child(ren) and be supportive if they show signs of increased anger.

### **Signs of Anger in Adults**

- Short temper/impatience.
- Sleep problems.
- Eating problems.
- Restlessness and agitation.
- Hitting and slamming objects, pets, or people.
- Desire to inflict harm.
- Verbal outbursts toward family, friends, or fellow workers.
- A sense of losing control over your life.
- Poor concentration or attention span.
- Obsessing about the event.
- Physical health affected; increase in blood pressure, dizzy, headaches, heart rate elevated, clenched jaw, knot in the stomach, and tight muscles, etc.
- You feel life should be fair, but it is not; and things are not how you want them to be.

### **Signs of Anger in Children**

- Behavioral outbursts, many times without an obvious cause.
- Sleep problems.
- Fights at school or home.
- Physical attacks on others or animals, even among pre-schoolers.
- Disobedience from otherwise well behaved child(ren).
- Child state he/she is really sad and does not know why.
- Complaints of stomachaches and headaches; or vague aches and pains.
- Other reactions similar to those of adults.

### **Dealing with Anger**

Some people have more problems than others dealing with anger. They either try to deny or ignore their feelings and keep them inside, or overreact and "blow-up." These negative coping strategies can be physically and emotionally unhealthy. Pretending we don't feel badly can have long-term effects that may eventually cause us to "lose it." Conversely, psychological research shows that acting out your anger will not relieve it, but instead will make it more intense. We can learn to control or diffuse anger by how we think about the event or people involved and by finding other ways to regain our sense of control and security. Anger can also mask other emotions, such as grief, loss, or fear. It is important to address these related emotions as a way to deal with angry feelings.

### **Controlling Your Anger**

- Admit you are angry.
- Recognize this is a common reaction to an overwhelming event. It is how you control and manage your reaction that makes the difference.
- Try to identify the related emotions that may be fueling your anger, (e.g., sorrow, fear.)
- Find appropriate outlets for these related and equally important emotions, (e.g., talk with family members or friends, seek grief counseling, get involved in activities to help victims, etc.)
- Understand that it not just the actual event that drives your anger, but how you think about it.
- Develop a "positive" outlook and look for what can be done to help rather than harm.
- Stop, take a deep breath, visualize something peaceful or enjoyable, and try to relax for a few minutes.
- Avoid/decrease negative ways to cope, such as misuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Find an acceptable outlet, such as exercise, getting involved with your favorite hobby, sports.
- Distract yourself from continuing to think about the event -- call a friend, go to a movie.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Turn off the TV and radio; play your favorite music.
- Keep to your daily routines.
- Consult your doctor or a mental health specialist if your reactions continue to intensify, or you feel like doing harm to yourself or others.
- If you are seeing a mental health professional, be sure to share your angry feelings.

### **Helping Children Control Anger**

- Realize they will imitate your responses and reactions.
- Let them understand anger is a normal emotion under these circumstances that can even include feelings of revenge. However, acting out anger, hurting others, and uncontrolled anger is not okay.
- Answer their questions honestly and openly; but always consider their developmental age.
- Make family time to talk to the child(ren) about their reaction to the events.
- Have child(ren) come up with ideas on how to help those who have been injured, left homeless, or otherwise effected by the tragedy.
- Teach them to stop, take a deep breath, and imagine a restful scene or enjoyable activity for a few minutes as a way to relax.
- Turn off the TV and make sure violence in the media is restricted or monitored.
- Try to understand and encourage children to talk about their fears/sense of loss.
- Try to help them see how they would feel if someone hurt, yelled at, or hit them.
- Sports, exercise, or other physical activity can be quite helpful.
- Be flexible in discipline and monitor your reactions to their misbehaviors.
- Seek mental health or physician consultation if these reactions do not clear up after 30 days.
- Keep family and school routines; get back to a normal life schedule as soon as possible.
- If age permits, get the child involved in volunteer work or community service, such as the Red Cross or Animal Shelter, where a child can feel that he/she is making a difference.

### **Warning Signs of Serious Emotional Trauma**

While strong emotional reactions to tragic events are normal, most will fade over the following weeks and most children soon will be able to resume normal activities with minimal displays of anger or anxiety. However, if any of the following symptoms or behaviors continue beyond a few weeks, or if any of these symptoms are exhibited to such a degree that it severely impacts the child's ability to participate in school or home activities, parents and teachers should seek mental health services for evaluation and possible treatment.

- Disruption in peer relationships (little or no interactions with friends, significant increase in conflict with classmates or friend).
- Strained family relationships (high degree of misbehavior, lashing out against family members, refusal to participate in normal family routines).
- Significant decrease in school performance.
- Ongoing physical complaints with no apparent cause.
- Use of chemicals, alcohol (or increase in comparison to previous behavior).
- Repeated nightmares and reporting strong fears of death, violence, etc.
- Repetitive play re-enacting the traumatic events.
- Low self esteem, negative talk about self (if this was not apparent prior to the trauma).
- General lack of energy and lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities.

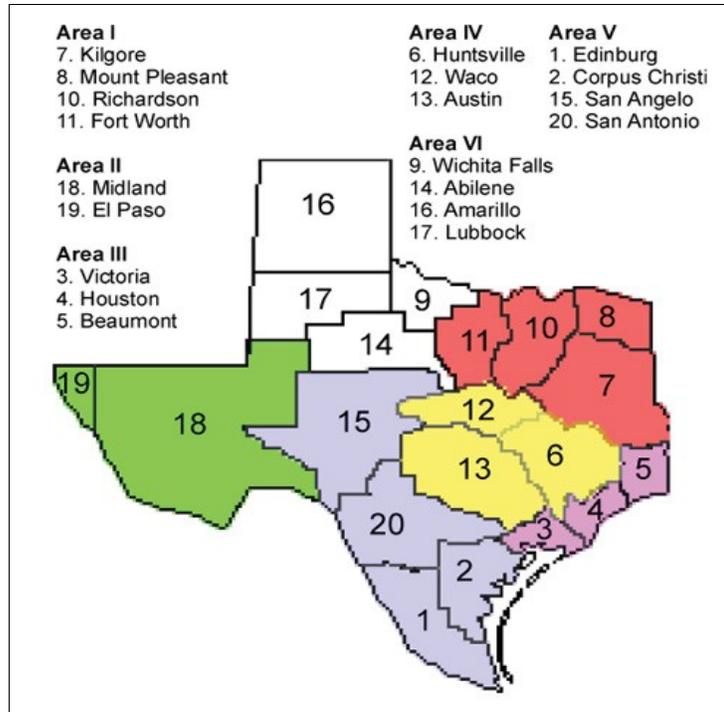
Parents and teachers can help children overcome traumatic effects of a tragedy or disaster and use the process as an opportunity to teach them how to cope more effectively and deal with new challenges. (Interestingly, the Chinese sign for "crisis" is two symbols – "Danger" and "Opportunity.") Depending on the scope of the event, the process may take time and patience and the willingness to reach out to friends, neighbors, and co-workers to lend mutual support.

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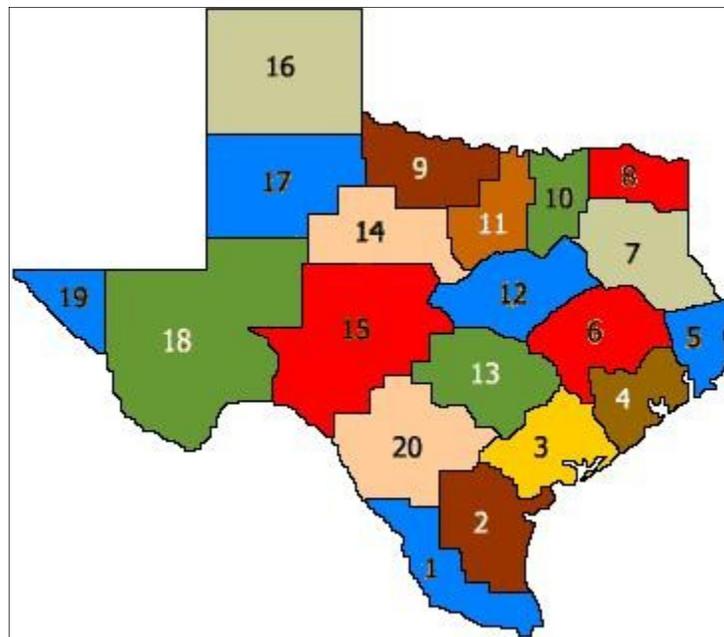
# Information from the Area Representatives!

# AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Area Representative Map



Regional ESC Coverage Map



Hello TASP Area 1 LSSPs!!! I am your re-elected TASP Area 1 Representative and look forward to working with you and for you to support LSSPs in our area and in Texas as well as to help support students, parents, teachers, and staff with promoting children and adolescents' mental health again the next two years. Area 1 encompasses Region 7 (Kilgore), Region 8 (Mount Pleasant), Region 10 (Richardson), and Region 11 (Fort Worth).

Your TASP board has been hard at work and met in San Antonio with newly elected Dana Goins taking office as the TASP President along with others who joined the team this year. The TASP board looks forward to serving LSSPs in Texas. Please contact us and visit the TASP website at: <http://txasp.org/>

In a recent meeting approximately 130 Area 1 LSSPs reported the top training needs for the area. It is important to note that these training topics will be training areas covered at the upcoming TASP Summer Institute that will be held in June. The top training areas included the following in order of priority:

- Academic & emotional/behavioral Evaluation
- Counseling & interventions
- Behavior techniques, crisis intervention & ABA
- Dyslexia
- DSM 5
- Autism, ID, Comorbid
- ADOS 2



Furthermore, Area 1 LSSPs reported that they are being asked more so today than ever before to conduct assessment for Specific Learning Disability (SLD). A few LSSPs reported that they do not feel adequately prepared to assess for SLD due to the districts, cooperatives or other employers resistance in allowing the LSSPs to attend updated advanced training in this area. The majority of LSSPs noted that in general it is very difficult to be approved to attend training outside of the district and that it is even more difficult to attend needed advanced training such as the TASP conference. The need for LSSPs to attend advanced training specific to LSSPs is an ongoing need that does not appear to be met at all regional services centers in Texas and appears to be a topic that many districts/employers do not understand. Specifically, LSSPs in Area 1 continue to be concerned that an LSSP consultant does not serve at the ESCs to voice informed concerns and needs for LSSPs. Additionally, the previously mentioned concern about approval to attend advanced trainings as those provided at the TASP conference and the upcoming TASP Summer Institute appear problematic. Advanced training specific for the LSSP is very important and providing this information to districts/employers as well as ESCs appears to be a major ongoing concern.

Throughout Texas the Evaluation Leads at ESCs are reportedly set to attend training with Flanagan & Ortiz through a Trainer of Trainer (TOT) approach. In this model Evaluation Leads will be trained and then will train evaluators at the various ESCs throughout Texas. This training will reportedly be geared for Educational Diagnosticians and LSSPs. Some LSSPs see a problem with this model especially because those who will be trained as trainers in the model do not represent background in the LSSP and advanced training typically is obtained by the LSSP from the professional (i.e. Flanagan & Ortiz) firsthand versus through a TOT approach. This problem apparently is specific to the LSSP as educational diagnosticians routinely are trained through educational diagnostician certificate programs at ESCs. Many ESCs as well as employers do not appear to understand that the LSSP is a highly trained professional with advanced knowledge in the area of psychology, that this includes cognitive assessment and that the LSSP possesses training at the specialist or doctoral level. Routinely LSSPs are told that ESCs or districts are not financially equipped to provide training that is advanced or specific to the LSSP due to budget restraints. However, LSSPs are the professionals employed with the highest specialized skills to address academic, behavioral, discipline and mental health needs of children

### Region III

As the new representative for Region III, I can tell you that the TASP board is continuing to work hard to promote the profession of school psychology in the state and provide quality services to you as a member. This year as the legislature meets in Austin, please remember that the decisions made will affect our practice in schools – especially in the form of budget cuts or increases to districts. TASP is committed to being a resource to you, but our board also plays a key role in being a resource to legislators as they consider the various bills affecting public education in the state. Please take a moment to talk to your fellow LSSPs about the importance of joining TASP and making our voice heard in Austin. Also, you'll want to tell them about the amazing Summer Institute being held this summer - hope to see you all in Corpus Christi! Should you have any concerns or suggestions for the board, please contact me at [georgeschanding@sheldonisd.com](mailto:georgeschanding@sheldonisd.com).



Thomas Schanding



Hello Area IV members! Hopefully your spring semester has gotten off to a smooth start, and you are not swamped with referrals and reevaluations. I am your Area IV representative starting a second term on the board. We had our first board meeting in January and I am excited about plans for TASP this year. You will be receiving information regarding our first Summer Institute, June 28-29 in Corpus Christi. Please save the date and join us not only for a good conference but also fun on the beach. The board continues to concentrate on issues important to TASP members such as legislation, conferences, membership, and venues of communication. We would really like to see an increase in membership, so please encourage your co-workers who are not currently members to join our organization. We are currently experiencing difficulties with our website and the ability for you to renew your membership online. This should be corrected very soon. You can also follow TASP on Facebook.

If you would like to contact me about events in your district or questions you may have regarding TASP, please don't hesitate to contact me. Good luck with the rest of your spring semester. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the summer institute.

Diane Friou

Area V

Jeremy Sullivan

Howdy, Area V. I hope everyone's school year is going well.

I wanted to inform everyone of an upcoming professional development opportunity that will be offered by the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and will be co-sponsored by TASP. We will be hosting Dr. Scott Poland, who will be presenting on "Contemporary Issues for Crisis Prevention, Intervention and Management". Dr. Poland is an internationally recognized expert on school crisis, bullying prevention, youth violence, suicide intervention, self injury, school safety, threat assessment, parenting and the delivery of psychological services in schools. He served on the President's Roundtable on Youth Violence and has testified about the needs of children before the U.S. Congress on four occasions. Dr. Poland was a founding member of the National Emergency Assistance Team for NASP, and he has led national crisis teams following numerous school shootings. Dr. Poland is a Past President of NASP and was the Director of Psychological Services (1982-2005) for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, a large Texas school district that received numerous state and national awards for its exemplary psychological services. Dr. Poland currently serves as Professor and Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Because this event is co-sponsored by TASP, all TASP members will be able to attend for no charge. For nonmembers, the cost for registration is \$45. CEU certificates will be provided.

This presentation will take place at the UTSA Downtown Campus on Thursday, April 25, 2013, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Buena Vista Building Room #1.328. To RSVP, please contact [Teresa.Pena@utsa.edu](mailto:Teresa.Pena@utsa.edu), and be sure to mention that you are a TASP member. If I can provide further information, please feel free to email me at [jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu).



Dear Ethical Eddie,

I always seek informed consent before providing psychological services, but some of my colleagues tell me that it's not necessary for conducting classroom observations. I need some guidance on this issue, because I want to "respect the right of persons to participate in decisions affecting their own welfare."

Signed,

Constance



Dear Constance,

I appreciate your commitment to respecting the rights of others, and am impressed by your use of language from the NASP Principles for Professional Ethics (2010). A closer look at that document will make it clear that informed parental consent is not necessarily ethically required for observations "as part of a regular program of instruction." However, consent must be sought if your observations are part of a more "extensive and ongoing" consultation or "if school actions may result in a significant intrusion on student or family privacy beyond what might be expected in the course of ordinary school activities" (p. 4). I hope this gives you the guidance you seek. Keep those letters coming!

-Eddie



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
**College of Education**™

**Ph.D. in Educational Psychology**  
**Specialization in School Psychology**

The Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with the School Psychology Specialization gives LSSPs the power of research. Students learn to conduct and use research to inform not only practice but to transform learning in schools. Start thinking revolution and apply for a fall or spring cohort today. For more information go to <http://www.educ.ttu.edu/>

Interested individuals should contact Dr. Tara Stevens at [tara.stevens@ttu.edu](mailto:tara.stevens@ttu.edu).



### School Psychology Program

The Department of Educational Psychology at UTSA is pleased to offer the Master of Arts program in School Psychology. The program includes coursework and field-based experiences consistent with guidelines provided by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists and the National Association of School Psychologists. Most courses are offered in the evening at the UTSA Downtown Campus, and full-time and part-time tracks are available. New admissions in the Fall 2011 semester included 31 students, with 13 additional students starting in the Spring 2012 semester. Application deadlines are as follows: July 1st for the Fall, November 1st for the Spring, and April 1st for the Summer.

For more information, please contact Dr. Jeremy Sullivan ([jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu))



University of Houston  
College of Education

## COLLABORATION

FOR LEARNING & LEADING

Department  
of Educational  
Psychology

### Ph.D. in School Psychology

The Texas School Psychologist is published four times a year. Articles, announcements, advertising, employment notices, and letters should be submitted to:

#### The Editor:

Amanda Drzymalla  
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The TASP newsletter is published to enhance communication among school psychologists in a manner that advances the general purpose of the Texas Association of School Psychologists. The acceptability of an ad for publication is based upon legal, social, professional, and ethical considerations. All advertising must be in keeping with the generally scholarly, and/or professional nature of the publication. Thus, TASP reserves the right to unilaterally reject, omit, or cancel advertising which it deems not to be in the best interest of the scholarly and professional objectives of the Association, and/or not in keeping with appropriate professional tone, content, or appearance. In addition, the Association reserves the right to refuse advertising submitted for the purpose of airing either side of controversial social or professional issues.

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#### Advertising Deadlines

Camera ready artwork or Employment Notices must be received prior to deadline date for desired publication. Contact TASP at [newsletter@txasp.org](mailto:newsletter@txasp.org)



### School Psychology Program

Texas State University offers a Specialist in School Psychology (SSP) degree in school psychology, approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The program endorses the scientist-practitioner training model. Texas State also offers a program for individuals who already hold a master's level psychology degree in a related field and would like to re-specialize in school psychology.

#### For more information, please contact:

Jon Lasser, Ph.D.  
Coordinator, School Psychology Program  
[www.txstate.edu/clas](http://www.txstate.edu/clas)

and adolescents in schools. With districts in Texas being hit by issues of disproportionality and high discipline the LSSP should be who is called to assist. These issues bring to the forefront the need for appropriate training and further advocacy for LSSPs.

Recently approximately 30 LSSPs were also asked by an Area 1 Regional Educational Service Center (ESC) representative what topics LSSPs wanted to have considered for online webinar training and the following were reportedly requested:

- Resources for intervention or alternatives to traditional discipline measures
- Disproportionality & cultural diversity
- Special Education law & discipline including interim placements
- Universal Screeners for academic, social, emotional & behavioral issues

*Government & Professional Relations:* Please continue to advocate for LSSPs in Texas and for mental health issues. You can do this by writing and calling your senator and representative as well as by visiting them in their local office. To find out who your Senator and Representatives are visit: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>

*Let's Get Together:* I would like to meet with LSSPs in all of the regions during the next two years. If you are a LSSP who lives in or close to Kilgore, Mount Pleasant, Fort Worth or Richardson and would like to help me with scheduling a TASP Area 1 meeting in your area please contact me by email. At these meetings I hope to be able to obtain your input to share with the TASP board as to what is important and needed in your area. I also would like for non-TASP members to be invited to the meeting to be able to share information about TASP and how the organization helps to support the role of the LSSP in the provision of school based mental health services. Please contact me. I look forward to meeting with you.

*Please also remember to:*

- Send me an email about what trainings or speakers you would like to see/hear at future TASP conferences.
- Send me an email about what trainings you would like to see happen at your Regional Educational Service Centers (ESC) or advocacy that you need in your area
- Send nominations for Awards & Scholarships
- Encourage LSSPs who are not TASP members to join
- Communicate to me anything else that you find is a need, area of service, or resource idea for Area 1 LSSPs
- Encourage your colleagues to submit articles or consider submitting articles yourself to the TASP online peer-reviewed journal that will be available at a later date

*As Your Area 1 Representative I Will Continue to:*

- Speak on your behalf at TASP board meetings as to what you find important and speak as the voice for Area 1 LSSPs
- Advocate for your approval to attend TASP Conferences & Institutes
- Advocate for LSSP Leadership Evaluation Assessment Personnel (LEAP) meetings at Area ESCs which is separate from the diagnostician LEAP meeting in order to allow time for LSSPs to receive specific needed training and discuss LSSP specific issues and hot topics with those working in the field
- Promote participation by TASP members on future TASP Boards
- Advocate for our profession at the local & state level
- Advocate for LSSPs at ESCs as well as school districts promoting approval of access to appropriate, specific & advanced training for LSSPs outside of district professional development

*TASP SURVEY-I* have been asked by many LSSPs in Area 1 to facilitate a new TASP survey. Topics that have been reported to be important to be covered included duties, hours, pay grades etc. If you have questions or topics that you would like to have included please contact me by email.

UPCOMING: TASP 1<sup>st</sup> Summer Institute Corpus Christi-June 28-29, 2013. This will be held at Holiday Inn - Downtown - Marina Tower

. *Getting it Right!*: An Intensive Institute Examining Current Issues in Eligibility, Differential Diagnosis & Assessment will be a great opportunity to receive advanced training specific to LSSPs. Inform your districts/employers now of this amazing opportunity. If you need support in obtaining approval for attendance I will be glad to write a letter or email to your district/employer about the importance of receiving advanced specific training. Please let me know if I can help you in this way. Personally I can't wait to go to the beach. It will be a time to relax and catch our breaths after the end to a long year. I plan to bring my children with me and make it a family mini-vacation.

Lastly, I encourage you to contact me at the email below with any suggestion, thought, or concern that you might have that I might be able to help with. I look forward to hearing from you and hope to see in Corpus Christi in June.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Daniel, PhD, LSSP  
TASP Area 1 Representative  
[lisa\\_m\\_daniel@hotmail.com](mailto:lisa_m_daniel@hotmail.com)

Texas A&M University Commerce

Students are admitted to the School Psychology program in both the Spring and Fall semesters. Deadlines for applications are 4/15 and 11/15, respectively.



Hello everyone! TASP is excited and pleased to announce our upcoming First Annual Summer Institute in Corpus Christi! It will be held June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn Corpus Christi-Downtown Marina. The focus of the Institute will be current issues in eligibility, differential diagnosis, and assessment. Topics include: issues in autism evaluation, supervision of school psychologists, ethical issues in school psychology, early childhood assessment and intervention, and functional behavior assessments. We will offer 6 hours of training on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> and 3 hours of training on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup>, for a total of 9 hours of professional development.

The cost of the Institute will be a very affordable \$75. During the conference, the room rate will be \$90 for a single and/or double room, \$129 for a triple, and \$139 for a quad. If you're planning on joining us for the Institute, why don't you bring the family and make it a beach vacation? You can take advantage of the rate special the hotel is running for the two days after the conference (Sunday and Monday). The rate will be \$119 for a single and \$139 a double. Reservations can be made by calling 800- HOLIDAY (group code - TASP or say you are with the Texas Association of School Psychologists). We will send out an email blast to all members once the website is ready to take online registration. We can't wait to see you in June!



## *Awards and Honors*

### Awards and Honors of 2013

The award ceremony of 2012 was a great success thanks to TASP members' nominations. Three categories were recognized this year: Outstanding School Psychologist (doctoral level), Outstanding Service to the Profession, and Outstanding Delivery of Psychological Services. The board was also excited to continue the additional recognition for Outstanding Poster Presentation.

Arlington Independent School District was recognized with the Outstanding Delivery of School Psychological Services honor. The psychological support staff (20 LSSPs, 3 LSSP Interns, and 17 Special Education Counselors) were described as "life long learners who understand the value of research based interventions and put those skills to use" regarding breadth and quality of services provided to 65, 000 students.

Jeremy Sullivan, Ph.D. was recognized with Outstanding Service to the Profession honor. Dr. Sullivan has made significant contributions to the field by being a leader in research and training of future practitioners at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Dr. Sullivan is the training director at the university and was described as having a strong, "ability to bring practical hands-on perspective to a range of different courses," while contributing to publications, conference presentations, and participating in both thesis and dissertation committees.

Jan Opella was honored with a Lifetime Achievement honor. Jan worked for the Bastrop Special Education Co-op for 25 years, where she supervised countless interns. She is a Past President of TASP and has conducted numerous workshops across the state on autism and behavior management.

The awards ceremony was conducted in front of one of its largest audiences providing the recipients with the exposure they deserved for their professional and personal endeavors in the field of school psychology. Congratulations to all nominees and recipients, and a special thanks to those who took the time to nominate the worthy honorees. TASP has already received one nomination for the upcoming conference, and as the awards and honors chair, I am looking forward to seeing who TASP members continue to nominate.

relating to the requirements for members appointed to the Texas

State Board of Examiners of **Psychologists**.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 501.051, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

(a-1) One of the members appointed under Subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) must practice as a licensed specialist in school psychology under Section 501.260.

SECTION 2. The changes in law made by this Act in the qualifications of members of the Texas State Board of Examiners of

**Psychologists** do not affect the entitlement of a member serving on the board immediately before the effective date of this Act to continue to serve for the remainder of the member's term. As the terms of board members expire, the governor shall appoint or reappoint a member who has the qualifications required for a member under Section 501.051(a-1), Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

The current status is that we are working with our legislative liaison to get this bill assigned to committee and scheduled for a public hearing. It is TASP's contention that not having a guaranteed LSSP representative on TSBEP amounts to regulation without representation. Please be on the look-out for requests from your Government and Professional Relations Chair that may request that you contact your representatives about this bill or a future companion bill in the senate. We will certainly keep you posted regarding the progress of this bill and other legislation that impacts your work in the schools.

If you are interested in following legislation on your own, it's easy! Go to the Texas Legislature website and browse around! <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

## **The School Social Work Role: Ideas for Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Although social workers have been working with difficult students in school districts for over 100 years, there is a lack of understanding from other professionals, students and parents about how to engage the services of school social workers. Anderson-Butcher and Ashton (2004) argued that the traditional school model alone no longer suffices; there is a need for collaboration amongst an assortment of professionals and entities to serve the ever-increasing social, emotional, physical and psychological needs of students.

“The main goal of school social work is to enable students to function and learn in the school environment” (Openshaw, 2008, p. 5). The reasons that students are referred to the school social worker are multifaceted (Kelly & Stone, 2009), and the students may require many different types of interventions to be successful in school. To achieve this goal, school social workers must perform a variety of tasks while filling multiple roles. National surveys indicated that school social workers perform an array of functions and that these functions may vary from region to region (Allen-Mears, 1994; Torres, 1996). Constable, Kuzmickaite, Harrison, and Volkmann (1999) noted that the role of each school social worker is determined by the school district in which the school social worker is employed. Kelly and Stone (2009) found that factors such as practice setting (case load size, age of children on caseload) also influenced the interventions used by a school social worker. Accordingly, the school social worker is best suited to help identify his or her function in the school or district education agency in which he or she is employed.

Sometimes, the school social work role is defined by the funding source (Frey & Dupper, 2005). If special education dollars are used to pay the school social worker, then the school social worker may work exclusively with students identified for special education services. Some school social work jobs are grant-funded. In these cases, the social worker serves the population specified in the grant. School districts also may employ school social workers to be part of a crisis intervention team to assist with mental health issues (Openshaw, 2008, p. 5). Generally, the work done by school social workers is part of the larger school mental health system, which is highly disjointed, varying widely from one region to another, between districts and even within school systems (Brener et al., 2007).

The role of the school social worker has always been complex but has traditionally included assessment, crisis intervention, direct service (e.g., group and individual counseling for students and/or their families, home visits), intervention with students with special needs, resource and program development (e.g., education personnel and family/parent products and programs), and community resource/liaison (e.g., mental health, court, advocacy, mediation). One study of school social work activities and patterns of delivery in 200 school districts showed both traditional and non-traditional activities took place (Chavkin, 1985). Traditional activities included direct service to families and children. Nontraditional activities include liaison work and services like administrative consultation, and group counseling occurred less frequently.

Social workers often serve as members of interdisciplinary teams that include school counselors, psychologists, diagnosticians, district administrators, special and general educators, vocational and transition specialists, school nurses, and parents. As members of interdisciplinary teams, school social workers collaborate with other school professionals to serve students who are most in need of supportive services in order to meet their educational goals (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Interdisciplinary teamwork can change the student’s ecological surroundings, impacting home, school and community, as well as the individual child, through network building, policy development, program implementation, and social advocacy efforts (Frey & Dupper, 2005).

School social workers provide group and individual counseling for students and their families, home visits, advocacy, mediation, and programs for education personnel, students, parents and families, and Anderson-Butcher et al. (2006) argued that the role of school social workers as school-community liaisons should be emphasized as well. Schaubman, Stetson and Plog (2011) and Thompson and Webber (2010) identified school

social workers as valuable tools in the endeavor to support educators to better handle students with profound emotional and behavioral problems. Effective intervention by a school social worker may consist of collaborating, consulting, developing behavior plans, and training others to work with difficult children in the context of a child’s daily school experience (Frey & George-Nichols, 2003). The role of the school social worker is instrumental in helping with difficult student problems.

A survey was sent to Texas school social workers in 2008 to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Texas school social workers. The responses are shown in Table 1.2. Average ratings indicate that counseling takes up the majority of the school social workers’ time, followed by community referrals, working with community agencies, crisis intervention, and home visits. Taking up the least amount of the school social workers’ time are special education services, staff development training, court referrals, and Medicaid billing

Survey respondents reported that a great deal of their professional time (31-65%) was spent in community referrals and counseling (30.6%). Seventy-two percent of the respondents reported that little of their professional time (1-10%) was spent in staff development training and special education services (55.6%). Thirty-six percent stated that little of their time (1-10%) was spent on crisis intervention and on home visits (27.8%). Thirty-eight percent of the respondents reported that some of their professional time (31-65%) was spent working with community agencies. Finally, survey respondents reported that none of their professional time was spent with court referrals (58.3%) or with Medicaid billing (86.1%).

**Table 1.2: Percentage of Professional Time Spent on Roles and Duties as a School Social Worker**

<b>Avg rating</b>	<b>None at all (0%)</b>	<b>A Little of my time (1-10%)</b>	<b>Some of my time (11-30%)</b>	<b>A lot of my time (31-65%)</b>	<b>A majority of my time (65% or more)</b>	
Community refer- rals	3.28	0.0%	30.6%	25.0%	30.6%	13.9%
Counseling	3.50	2.8	19.4	25.0	30.6	22.2
Court referrals	1.81	58.3	22.2	8.3	2.8	8.3
Crisis intervention	3.00	0.0	36.1	33.3	25.0	5.6
Home visits	2.78	16.7	27.8	25.0	22.2	8.3
Medicaid billing	1.14	86.1	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Special education services	2.39	11.1	55.6	22.2	5.6	5.6
Staff development training	2.17	8.3	72.2	13.9	5.6	0.0
Working with com- munity agencies	3.03	8.3	22.2	38.9	19.4	11.1

School psychologists and other personnel could collaborate more effectively with school social workers if they understood the social workers skills. Currently this lack of understanding and confusion creates a situation in which school social workers are often under-utilized. In order to work more effectively with school social workers school psychologists should meet with the social workers in his or her district to, clarify the job description and role of the social worker. Once the role is clarified and social work skill levels understood, then psychologists and social workers will be able to effectively collaborate with each other in behalf of children and adolescents.

Authors:

Linda Openshaw, DSW, LCSW

Harvetta Henry, Ph.D.

Dana Harader, Ph.D.

Harry Fullwood, Ph.D.

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# **Research and Practice in the Schools: The Official Journal of the Texas Association of School Psychologists**

*Research and Practice in the Schools* is a publication of the Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP). It is an online, peer-reviewed journal that provides TASP members with access to current research that impacts the practice of school psychology. The primary purpose of *Research and Practice in the Schools* is to meet the needs of TASP members for information on research-based practices in the field of school psychology. To meet this need, the journal welcomes timely and original empirical research, theoretical or conceptual articles, test reviews, book reviews, and software reviews. Qualitative and case-study research designs will be considered as appropriate, in addition to more traditional quantitative designs. All submissions should clearly articulate implications for the practice of psychology in the schools.

## Instructions for Authors

### General Submission Guidelines

All manuscripts should be submitted in electronic form to either of the co-editors ([jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu) or [art.hernandez@tamucc.edu](mailto:art.hernandez@tamucc.edu)) as an email attachment. Manuscripts should be submitted in MS Word format and labeled with the manuscript's title.

It is assumed that any manuscript submitted for review is not being considered concurrently by another journal. Each submission must be accompanied by a statement that it has not been simultaneously submitted for publication elsewhere, and has not been previously published.

Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted material from other sources. IRB approval should have been obtained and should be noted in all studies involving human subjects. Manuscripts and accompanying materials become the property of the publisher. Upon acceptance for publication, authors will be asked to assign copyright of the paper to TASP. The editors reserve the right to edit the manuscript as necessary for publication if accepted.

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced with margins of one inch. All articles should meet the requirements of the *APA Publication Manual, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, in terms of style, references and citations. Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the document. Illustrations should be provided as clean digital files in .pdf format with a resolution of 300 dpi or higher. All illustrations should be submitted as separate files, not embedded in the text of the document. Tables and figures may be embedded in the text. A short descriptive title should appear above each table with a clear legend and any footnotes below.

### The Review Process

After receiving the original manuscript, it will be reviewed by the Editors and anonymously by two or more reviewers from the Editorial Board or individuals appointed on an *ad hoc* basis. Reviewers will judge manuscripts according to a specified set of criteria, based on the type of submission. Submissions that are not of a type cited in this document will be evaluated using a modified set of these criteria as judged most appropriate by the Editors.

Upon completion of the initial review process, feedback will be offered to the original (primary) author with either (a) a preliminary target date for publication; (b) a request for minor editing or changes and speedy resubmission; (c) significant changes with an invitation for resubmission once these changes are made; or, (d) a decision that the submission does not meet the requirements of *Research and Practice in the Schools*.

Editorial Checklists:

Original Empirical Research

Question	Reviewer Comments
Does the submission fall within the purposes of the journal and will its publication serve the members of TASP?	
Are research questions clearly stated and presented in the context of the current literature?	
Are the research questions important, ones that would advance knowledge, test a theory, or guide practice?	
Was a suitable research design, including statistical techniques if appropriate, used to answer the research questions?	
Was an adequate sample collected to answer the research questions?	
Was data analysis correctly conducted and results properly interpreted?	
Did the study findings turn out to be important?	
Was information presented clearly and in a manner that aided the reader's understanding?	
Should the manuscript be accepted for publication? If not, should the authors be encouraged to revise and resubmit?	

Theoretical or Conceptual Articles

Question	Reviewer Comments
Does the submission fall within the purposes of the journal and will its publication serve the members of TASP?	
Are research questions clearly stated and presented in the context of the current literature?	
Are the conclusions important?	
Does the paper make an important or unique contribution to the field?	
Should the manuscript be accepted for publication? If not, should the authors be encouraged to revise and resubmit?	

Test Reviews

Question	Reviewer Comments
Does the submission fall within the purposes of the journal and will its publication serve the members of TASP?	
Does the review provide a description of the test, the purposes of the assessment, identification of the target population, and the intended uses of the test?	
Does the review provide information about administration of the test and scoring procedures?	
Does the review describe how the test was developed, what underlying assumptions or theory guided the decisions about how to define the construct, and details on item development?	
Does the review discuss the test's standardization, reliability, and validity?	
Does the review summarize the test's strengths and weaknesses?	
Does the review provide a summary with recommendations for use of the test?	
Should the manuscript be accepted for publication? If not, should the authors be encouraged to revise and resubmit?	

## Book Reviews

Question	Reviewer Comments
Does the submission fall within the purposes of the journal and will its publication serve the members of TASP?	
Does the review provide a clear citation of the book in APA format?	
Does the review clearly present a basic summary of the book and its findings or premises?	
Does the review provide a brief summary or analysis of how the book might apply to the practice of school psychology?	
Was information presented clearly and in a manner that aided the reader's understanding?	
Should the manuscript be accepted for publication? If not, should the authors be encouraged to revise and resubmit?	

## Software Reviews

Question	Reviewer Comments
Does the submission fall within the purposes of the journal and will its publication serve the members of TASP?	
Does the review provide a description of the software, the purposes of the software, its intended uses?	
Does the review provide information about the technical requirements and ease of use of the software?	
Does the review consider how the software might assist the practice of school psychology?	
Does the review summarize the software's strengths and weaknesses?	
Does the review provide a summary with recommendations for use of the software?	
Should the manuscript be accepted for publication? If not, should the authors be encouraged to revise and resubmit?	

\*These submission guidelines were adapted by the editors from the work of Laurie Klose, the requirements of the NASP Communiqué (<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/cqguidelines.aspx>), the APA journals (<http://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/instructions.aspx>), and the Mental Measurements Yearbook (<http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/revieworg.html>).

## **National Response to the School Shootings in Newtown, CT**

The National Association of School Psychologists provided immediate and intensive assistance and responsive services to school psychologists in the area and across the nation. The following is a reprint of NASP documents and resources related to the response to the crisis and to creating more mental health services in schools as a preventative effort against such atrocities. In addition, the official NASP policies related to school safety are included here.

### **NASP Resources Related to School Safety and Violence Prevention**

#### **Immediate Response to Newtown, CT events**

1. NASP Reaction to events in Newtown, CT; press release; 12-14-12
2. Tips for Teachers and Parents Following School and Community Violence; power point presentation; 12-16-12
3. Stigmatizing Mental Health or Developmental Disorders is Harmful; press release; 12-18-12
4. NASP Calls for Comprehensive School Safety Policies; policy recommendations; 12-20-12
5. NASP Cautions Against Increasing Armed Security to Improve School Safety; Press release; 1-9-13
6. NASP Recommendations for Comprehensive School Safety Policies; Policy recommendations; January 2013

#### **Prior to Newtown, CT events**

1. Dealing with a Death in School; NASP Resource; 2012
2. Responsible Media Coverage of Crisis Events Impacting Children and Youth; NASP Resource; 2012
3. Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers; NASP Resource; 2006
4. Tips for School Administrators for Reinforcing School Safety; NASP Resource; 2006
5. Helping Children Cope With Crisis: Care for Caregivers; NASP Resource; 2003
6. Coping With Crisis: Tips for Parents and Educators; NASP Resource; 2002
7. Coping With Crisis: Helping Children With Special Needs; NASP Resource; 2002

#### **Current Related NASP Position Papers**

1. School violence
2. The Importance of School Mental Health Services
3. Bullying Prevention and Intervention in Schools
4. Appropriate Behavioral, Social, and Emotional Supports to Meet the Needs of All Students
5. Appropriate Academic Supports to Meet the Needs of All Students

#### **NASP Resources Currently Under Development**

1. Fact sheet on building security
2. Updated research fact sheet on school safety and climate.
3. Joint set of recommendations with related school mental health folks, the school administrators and the SROs
4. Youth Gun Violence Fact Sheet

## **NASP Recommendations for Comprehensive School Safety Policies January 2013**

The United States of America has no greater responsibility than safeguarding the well-being of our children. Ensuring safe schools and communities is paramount to this responsibility.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has long been a leader in promoting safe, supportive learning environments that protect both the physical and psychological safety of students and staff. We applaud President

Obama on committing to identifying concrete and comprehensive strategies to ensure that we meet this responsibility for every school, child, family, and community in the country. His charge to members of his cabinet and members of Congress to work with national safety experts to craft solutions will improve this process. We strongly agree that such strategies must include addressing mental health and believe they should reinforce collaborative efforts between schools, families, and communities. We also appreciate the President's acknowledgement that effective policies should be built upon known evidence-based strategies and practices.

With the President's announcement comes the urgency to not allow the light shed on this issue by the tragedy in Newtown, CT to dim without our leaders taking real, meaningful action. NASP is committed to helping guide policies that lead to increased physical and psychological safety in schools by providing the recommendations outlined below and endorsing the efforts of other allied organizations and experts, such as the *December 2012 Connecticut School Shooting Position Statement* released last month by the Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence.

Our goal is to highlight common ground, of which there is a great deal among school safety experts. Further, we strive to ensure that our focus moves beyond the historical practice of primarily increasing school building safety measures (e.g., metal detectors, armed security guards, surveillance cameras) and instead focus on addressing the continuum of needs and services that lead to improved safety, well-being, and learning for children and youth. Effective school safety is a day-in, day-out commitment that infuses every aspect of school life. Our challenge is to not let increased anxiety over this horrible tragedy obscure the proven fundamentals of violence prevention. Instead we must become more unified, vocal advocates for policies that support what schools *can* do effectively, which in turn supports our schools' primary mission of learning.

### **A Call to Action**

NASP proposes the following policy and practice recommendations to most effectively address school safety:

**1. Increase access to mental health services and supports in schools.** Only a fraction of students in need actually receive mental health services, and among those that do, the majority access those services in school. Nevertheless, the availability of school-based mental health professionals remains inadequate to meet the mental health needs of our children and youth. Schools should be enabled to hire more school-based mental health professionals (e.g. school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers) and funds should be allocated specifically for hiring these professionals. The recommended ratio of students to school counselor is 250:1; the recommended ratio for school psychologists is 700- 500:1, and the recommended ratio for school social workers is 400:1. Schools and districts should be held accountable for making an effort to meet or at least work toward these ratios each year. Increased access to mental health services and supports in schools, including the infusion of social-emotional learning in our classrooms, is vital to improving the physical and psychological safety of our students and schools, as well as academic performance and problem-solving skills. Additionally, close collaboration between school-employed (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers) and community-employed mental health services providers (e.g., professional counselors, clinical psychologists, and clinical social workers) is critical to meeting the range of mental health needs. School psychologists play an integral role in providing direct services to students and teachers, while coordinating with community resources to ensure that all students receive the support they need to be successful.

**2. Develop safe and supportive schools.** Despite the horror that we all feel after the shooting in Newtown, CT, schools remain one of the safest places for children in the United States. We need to continue to focus on how we build and maintain safe school environments that promote learning, psychological health, and student success. We need to ensure that adequate learning supports and policies are present to provide a continuum of services that respond to the needs of *all* students. This requires treating learning and mental health supports as equally important as, and fully integrated with, school management and instruction. Schools should be required to include measures of school climate and availability of learning supports on par with student academic performance in accountability plans. It is critical to enhance school connectedness and trust between students and adults as well as reinforce open communication and the importance of reporting concerns about someone hurting themselves or others. School psychologists play an integral role in working with administrators and teachers to ensure that building systems and policy are conducive to safe and supportive conditions for learning.

**3. Implement school safety initiatives that consider both psychological and physical safety.** Effective school safety efforts should utilize evidence-based practices to ensure the well-being of all students and well as their physical safety. Reasonable building security measures, such as secure doors, lighted and monitored hallways, and check in-check out systems for visitors, are important. Although there have been calls to increase the presence of armed guards at schools, the research regarding schools that utilize armed security generally demonstrate non-significant impacts on reducing violence while at the same time result in students feeling less safe. Students' perception of safety is not a trivial consideration given that simply feeling unsafe impedes learning and the ability to develop a nurturing, supportive, and welcoming school environment. An over-emphasis on extreme physical security measures alone, such as increasing armed security and/or arming school staff, will not improve school safety, and in fact may undermine the primary mission of schools to ensure learning while safeguarding our children. (See *NASP Cautions Against Increased Armed Security to Address School Safety*, [www.nasponline.org/safety\\_armedsecurity](http://www.nasponline.org/safety_armedsecurity).)

**4. Improve screening and threat assessment procedures to identify and meet the needs of individuals at risk for causing harm to themselves and others.** Schools must provide the infrastructure to develop and maintain active school safety and crisis teams that focus on efforts year-round to promote a safe, positive school culture while minimizing the impact of school crises when they occur. This entails a multitiered approach consistent with other school systems of support—which includes universal mental health screenings and interventions as well as more intensive approaches for students deemed at risk. In collaboration with school employed mental health professionals, each school should be required to develop a plan to identify those students at risk for violence to themselves others. In addition, schools should provide on-going professional development opportunities for educators about how to identify students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties, or who may be at risk for harming themselves or others. Critical to this process, is collaboration and communication with other education, health, mental health, and law enforcement agencies, and schools should have a clearly defined communication and information sharing plan.

**5. Establish trained school safety and crisis teams.** Schools and districts need trained school safety and crisis teams and plans that are consistently reviewed and practiced. Training should encompass ongoing prevention and early intervention as well as response and recovery in the event the unpreventable occurs. Plans and training should facilitate collaboration with first responders and community providers. Teams should include key administrators, security personnel, school mental health professionals, and other relevant staff. A primary goal should be to reinforce learning as well as safety. (See NASP's PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum, [www.nasponline.org/prepare](http://www.nasponline.org/prepare).)

**6. Conduct a national campaign to reduce stigma around mental illness and to promote mental health on par with physical health.** Too much stigma about mental health exists in our country. This stigma reduces the likelihood that families and students will seek out and receive the mental health supports and services needed to learn and thrive in school and throughout life. With appropriate treatment, especially early intervention, people with mental illness can lead full and productive lives. Given the natural interaction between physical and mental health, the importance of caring for an individual's mental health needs must be on par with the importance of physical health. Schools should be encouraged to incorporate mental health education into existing health standards.

**7. Improve policies that limit exposure to media violence among children, youth, and vulnerable populations.** The negative effects of exposure to violence on children and youth are well documented and include increased risk of trauma and academic and behavior problems. While families, communities, educators, and law enforcement must continue to work together to reduce children's exposure to violence in their homes and neighborhoods, our society and the entertainment industry must also recognize and respond to the negative effects that media violence is having on individuals. To ensure the psychological safety of our children and youth, policies must regulate and limit exposure to media violence among children, youth, and other vulnerable populations.

**8. Review and revise as needed current policies and legislation addressing access to firearms by those who have the potential to cause harm to themselves or others.** We must prevent the misuse of weapons by people who are intent on causing harm to themselves or others. Experts on the research related to the prevention of violence, and specifically

school violence, should be charged with offering substantive recommendations to our elected officials on how our current laws might be improved so that tragic events like the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting do not ever occur again.

Responding effectively to these priorities will also require policies that promote education, training, and research. Effective approaches will take into account the mission and purpose of schools, and how schools and communities can work together to fulfill them. We must create and pass legislation and funding to reduce and prevent violence while also promoting the learning and well-being of our children and youth.

**About NASP:** NASP represents more than 25,000 school psychologists in the United States and abroad. School psychologists work with families, educators, and community providers to create safe, supportive schools; promote students' academic success; and support students' healthy behavior and development. They also serve on school safety, crisis, and mental health teams and are often leaders in helping to develop comprehensive school safety plans. NASP's longstanding leadership in school safety and crisis prevention and response includes helping to build capacity at the local level through our PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum ([www.nasponline.org/prepare](http://www.nasponline.org/prepare)) and providing direct support and resources for families and schools in the event of major crises through our website and our National Emergency Assistance Team ([www.nasponline.org/safety\\_crisis](http://www.nasponline.org/safety_crisis)). NASP also provides guidance to school leaders through various resources such as *A Framework for School-Wide Bullying Prevention and Safety*.

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Press release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

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## **NASP Cautions Against Increasing Armed Security to Improve School Safety**

**Bethesda, MD**—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has long advocated for making school safety a priority. The tragic events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012 further bring to light the imperative for a serious national commitment to ensuring the safety of our school children and staff. However, we must guard against letting our sense of urgency obscure evidence-based school safety initiatives in favor of seemingly obvious and potentially harmful approaches, particularly those that bring more guns into schools.

Effective school safety efforts consider both physical and psychological safety and utilize evidence-based practices to ensure the well-being of all students. Reasonable building security measures, such as secure doors, lighted and monitored hallways and check in-check out systems for visitors, are important. However, an over-emphasis on extreme physical security measures alone, such as increasing armed security and/or arming school staff, will not improve school safety, and in fact may undermine the primary mission of schools to ensure learning while safeguarding our children.

First, schools remain among the safest places for children and youth. Incidents that would require deadly force in schools remain incredibly rare. Based on the U.S. Center for Disease Control's School-Associated Violent Death Study for the 2009-2010 school year, the odds of a young person ages 5 to 18 years being the victim of a homicide at school, on their way to school, or at a school-sponsored event was 1 in 2.5 million. While any student death deserves extraordinary consideration, providing armed security in each school for the sole purpose of responding to violent crises would be an inefficient use of valuable resources and personnel, and further sends a message to students that there is

in fact a risk worthy of such measures even in the absence of such risk. The cost-benefit of putting an armed security officer in every school rather than effectively using unarmed security personnel should be carefully weighed. According to the National Association of School Resource Officers, it costs approximately \$80,000 a year, per school, to have a trained, armed school resource officer in each building. According to estimates made by Asa Hutchinson, an official with the Department of Homeland Security, and as reported by *The Washington Post*, placing an armed officer in each school will cost between \$2 and 3 billion dollars per year. Such decisions should be made based on individual school need, not via universal mandate.

Second, the research available regarding schools that do utilize armed security generally demonstrate non-significant impacts on reducing actual violence while at the same time students report feeling *less* safe. Students' perception of safety is not a trivial consideration given that simply feeling unsafe impedes learning and the ability to develop a nurturing, supportive, and welcoming school environment. In this regard, providing armed security has the potential to be more harmful than helpful to the very students we aim to protect.

Third, the presence of trained security personnel is important, especially when these professionals are considered integral members of the school community who regularly contribute to ongoing school safety efforts and to a sense of trust between students and adults. Like all school personnel, a mitigating factor of their effectiveness is the quality of interactions they maintain with students. One recent study found that the presence of school security officers in school decreased violence. However, the same study found that the presence of security *with firearms* in school actually led to a significant *increase* in violence.

Fourth, relying on armed security, or worse, school personnel with basic training in using firearms as our frontline intervention to school violence neglects the significant training needed to respond in a violent crisis, such as confronting an armed shooter in a school building. The physiological and psychological reaction to a crisis or life-threatening experience can impede the ability to respond appropriately. Even among trained police officers, there is significant variability in who shoots in a given situation based on various predictors. In fact, a research brief from the RAND Corporation recommended that police officers should expand their regular training to include more diverse and dynamic scenarios and decision-making exercises to improve and maintain their reflexes and judgment. Effective training with firearms must be intensive and ongoing to be effective. It is unreasonable to hold school based personnel to these high standards, and it would be irresponsible to arm school teachers or administrators in the absence of such training.

Fifth, focusing exclusively on increasing armed security ignores the fact that efforts to safeguard students must occur long before an individual is on the premises with the intent to cause harm to others as well as themselves. School safety requires an ongoing commitment to creating a school environment where students feel welcomed and supported. Schools must allow for the development of trusting relationships among staff, students, and families where students feel connected and part of a close-knit and caring community, and in which they feel empowered to report any safety concerns. To achieve this, all school staff must commit to creating safe and supportive schools. School security, such as school resource officers, can contribute significantly to these efforts, although arming them as a general rule is not the answer. Schools must have trained safety and crisis teams and plans that balance physical and psychological safety measures. In addition, all students must have access to school-based mental health supports that are coordinated with families and community resources.

There is widespread consensus among national school safety and violence prevention experts on what is most effective, as articulated in the *December 2012 Connecticut School Shooting Position Statement* released by the Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence. Policy makers, educators, public safety professionals, mental health professionals, and families need to focus their collective energies on evidence-based school safety measures, not quick fix reactions that defy evidence and research.

For NASP's comprehensive school safety recommendations please see *NASP Comprehensive School Safety Recommendations* at [www.nasponline.org/safetyrec2013](http://www.nasponline.org/safetyrec2013).

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