



**Advancing the Value of Your Role and Best Practices for Children: Ignite Your Inner Advocate!**

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### Introduction Activity

Name	One thing you hope to learn...
Position	
One thing that you already know about this topic...	How would you caption the picture shown?



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### Learning Objectives

- Identify the need for School Psychologists to be mental health providers in schools
- Explore current policies existing for mental health in schools.
- Examine opportunities for School Psychologists to advocate for mental health practices in schools
- Navigate case law regarding the legal and ethical implications for advocacy for School Psychologists
- Understand how to start at the school level as well as how to make a difference at the district, state, or federal level.

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### Need for School Mental Health



### Mental Health in Schools?

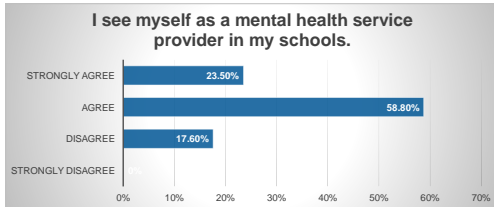
- What percentage of children in the US has a diagnosable mental health disorder?
- Of those who receive treatment, what percentage of them receive interventions in school?



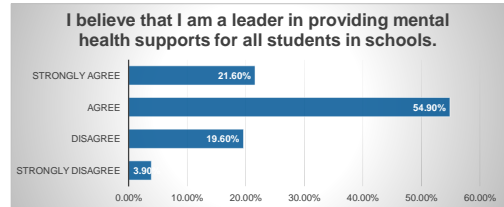
### Mental Health Services in Schools?

- School based counseling programs improve student mental wellness, behavioral functioning, and academic achievement.
- School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, discipline referrals and improving test scores.

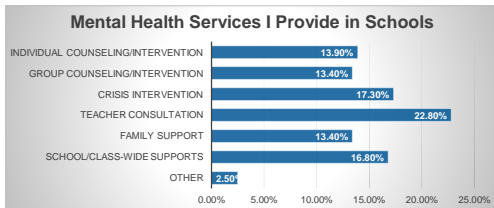
Nebraska Data



Nebraska Data



Nebraska Data



Elbow Partner talk

- What do you notice about the Nebraska data?
- What is reflective of your current practices?
- What is inconsistent with your current practices?

Current Opportunities

When Opportunity Knocks,  
Don't Let Fear Hold You Back.  
Open The Door And  
Embrace the Opportunity  
That Has Come Forth.

Major Public Policy Issues in Education

- **International Competition**
  - College/Career Readiness
- **Addressing Disparate Discipline Practices**
- **Halting the School to Prison Pipeline**
- **Closing Achievement Gaps**
- **Teacher/principal accountability**
- **Balance Federal/State/Local role**
- **School Climate**
- **School Safety**
- **Improving behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health**

## Current Policies in the Every Student Succeeds Act

- Focus on comprehensive learning supports
- School quality key indicator in accountability
- Use of Title IV funds for MTSS, PBIS, and other systems of support
- Dedicated funding to:
  - improve school safety and promote students' physical and mental health well-being;
  - prevent and reduce substance abuse, school violence, and bullying;
  - strengthen parent and community engagement to ensure safe, healthy, and school environments.
  - Provide professional development to school staff
- School employed mental health professionals (e.g. school psychologists) shall be consulted in the development, implementation, and evaluation of any school-community mental health partnership

## Current policy discussion

- **School Safety National Activities**—The Committee recommendation includes \$105,000,000 for the School Safety National Activities, including up to \$5,000,000 for Project SERV. This funding supports activities to improve student safety and well-being, including improving school climates, access to mental healthcare, and emergency management response; preventing school violence; and addressing the consequences of school violence or other traumatic events such as natural disasters.
- **Partnerships to Expand Access to Mental Health Professionals in Schools**.—The Committee includes continued funding for a demonstration program to test and evaluate innovative partnerships between institutions of higher education and high-needs State or local educational agencies to train school counselors, social workers, psychologists, or other mental health professionals. This could help demonstrate innovative ideas to foster a pipeline between graduate programs that train these professionals and local educational agencies, to expand access to such professionals in high need schools and ultimately improve student outcomes.

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## Current Policy Discussion

- **Safe School Design**.—The Committee recognizes the vital role of school design in the development and achievement of evidence based strategies and programs related to school facility security that promote a positive school climate for all students. The Committee encourages the Department to partner with outside experts and other Federal agencies as appropriate to develop best-practices and design guidelines for school facilities to improve school safety and school climate. These guidelines, while focused on security and student safety, must uphold the aesthetics of the school premises as a learning and teaching environment and not diminish the uplifting, positive learning atmosphere that is essential to the best educational conditions. The guidelines should address, among other things, lessons learned from past incidents and the arrival of first responders. It should provide guidance on building elements that impact security, including but not limited to, entrances and exits, escape routes, hiding spaces, hallways, and building layout to protect students and school personnel.
- **School Safety Clearinghouse and Mental Health Services for Students**.—The Committee requests a briefing for the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 90 days of enactment on: (1) the progress made by the Federal government in identifying, assessing, and disseminating evidence-based approaches to maintaining safe schools and positive learning environments for all students, including establishing a clearinghouse for such approaches; and (2) improving and expanding access to mental health services for students.
- **Trauma-informed Care**.—The Committee directs the Department to ensure activities within this account support the implementation of trauma-informed practices and other mental health supports in schools. Fostering trauma-informed cultures in schools helps both students and staff succeed by addressing the impacts of trauma; improves school capacity to identify, refer, and provide services to students; can improve staff retention and help keep kids in school; and support learning environments where students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

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## Current Policy Discussions

- **Safe Schools**.—The Committee includes investments in both HHS and Education to improve mental healthcare and safety in schools. The recommendation includes \$153,000,000, an increase of \$35,000,000, for HHS programs such as Project Aware to expand the capacity for mental health agencies to support mental health resources in schools and connect school-aged youth and their families to needed services. The recommendation also includes \$105,000,000, an increase of \$10,000,000, for competitive grants to States and school districts for evidence-based activities to improve school safety and promote safe and positive learning environments for students. In addition, the Committee recommendation includes \$1,220,000,000, an increase of \$50,000,000, for Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants, formula funding directly to school districts that they can use for the same activities.
- **Project AWARE**.—The Committee provides \$103,001,000, an increase of \$32,000,000, for Project AWARE. This program increases awareness of mental health issues and connects young people that have behavioral health issues and their families with needed services. SAMHSA is encouraged to use funds to provide mental health services in schools and for school aged youth. Of the amount provided for Project AWARE, the Committee directs SAMHSA to use \$10,000,000 for discretionary grants to support efforts in high-crime, high-poverty areas and, in particular, communities that are seeking to address relevant impacts and root causes of civil unrest, community violence, and collective trauma. These grants should maintain the same focus as fiscal year 2019 grants. SAMHSA is encouraged to continue consultation with the Department of Education in administration of these grants. The Committee requests a report on progress of grantees 180 days after enactment.

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## Policies on School Safety and Mental Health are significant priorities!



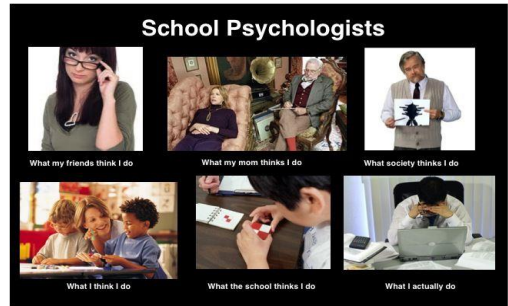
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## Making The Case for School Psychologists



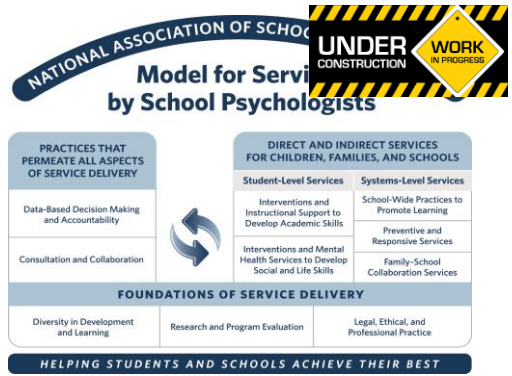
# School Psychologists: Qualified Providers of Mental and Behavioral Health Services

## School Psychologists as Mental Health Providers???



## Role of the school psychologist

School psychologists are uniquely trained to deliver high quality mental and behavioral health services in the school setting to ensure all students have the support they need to be successful in school, at home, and throughout life!



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## NASP White Paper: School Psychologists' Mental and Behavioral Health Role

- School psychologists are qualified MBH providers
- NASP training and practice standards encompass MBH services
- School psychologists are recognized in the ACA and NCLB as qualified providers



### School Psychologists: Qualified Health Professionals Providing Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health Services

*School psychologists are uniquely trained to deliver high quality mental and behavioral health services in the school setting to ensure all students have the support they need to be successful in school, at home, and throughout life!*

School psychologists are uniquely positioned in schools to facilitate the development, delivery, and monitoring of positive, effective, and culturally responsive mental and behavioral health services of prevention and intervention. As Hagler and Meink (2014) have observed, "school psychologists are situated at and take in the intersectional system where children spend 70 hours or more a week" (p. 29). School psychologists' breadth-based preparation in academic, mental, and behavioral health service providers, coupled with their engagement in and familiarity with schools' organizational and cultural contexts, equip them to play a primary role in maintaining and enhancing school-based mental and behavioral health programs.

The mental and behavioral health of students is a necessary, appropriate, and critical focus of education for individuals birth to age 21. Mental and behavioral wellness is directly linked to overall positive student achievement, school climate, high school graduation rates, and the prevention of risk behaviors, disciplinary incidents, and substance abuse (Center for Health and Healthcare in Schools, 2016). These factors, in turn, are associated with such important life outcomes as improved employment relationships, higher earnings, greater employment stability, and better likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system (Van Lath, Mayfield, Miller, & Pomeroy, 2016).

**School psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide mental and behavioral health services in schools.**

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/Adolescent-Mental-and-Behavioral-Health-Services.aspx>

## NASP Position Statement

Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents

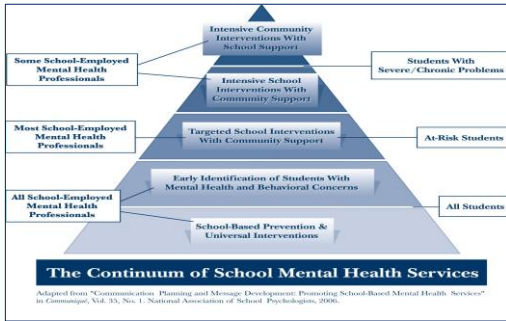


### Resolution: School Psychologists as Qualified Mental and Behavioral Health Service Providers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of School Psychologists affirms that school psychologists are qualified providers of child and adolescent mental and behavioral health services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Association of School Psychologists remains committed to improving the capacity of school psychologists to provide coordinated, comprehensive, and culturally responsive school mental and behavioral health services.

### Model of School Based Mental Health Services



### Prevention and Universal Interventions

- Prevention and wellness promotion
- Universal screening for academic, behavioral, and emotional barriers to learning

**Examples**

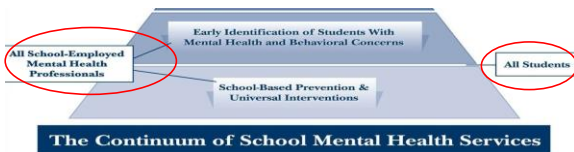
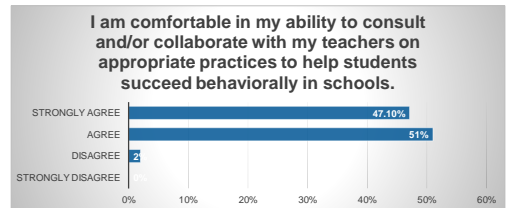
- Consultation with teachers/administrators/families
- MTSS design/implementation
- Social Emotional Learning
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Effective discipline policies and practices
- Bullying/Violence Prevention
- Crisis prevention and intervention teams
- Fostering positive relationships among students and staff



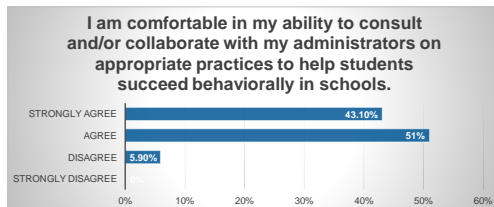
### Early Identification

- Data analysis
- Staff development/Mental Health First Aid
- Suicide Risk/Threat Assessment
- Protocols for Responding to Bullying
- Systems to report concerns
- Parent/Family Education

### Nebraska Data



### Nebraska Data

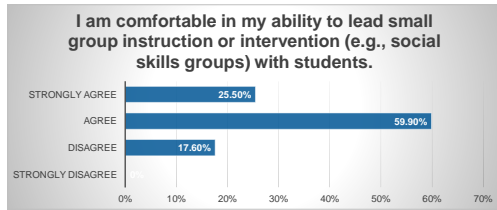


### Targeted Interventions

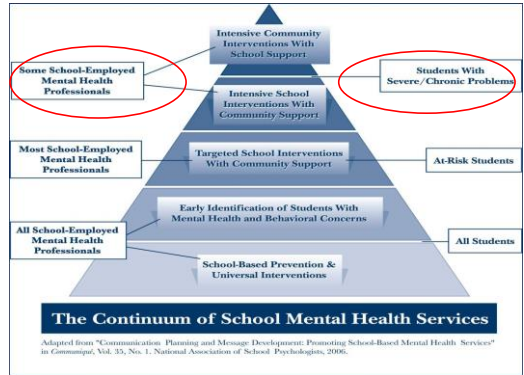
- Check-In Check Out
- Group Counseling
- Teacher/Family Consultation
- Solution focused therapy
- Behavior Plans
- Mentoring
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



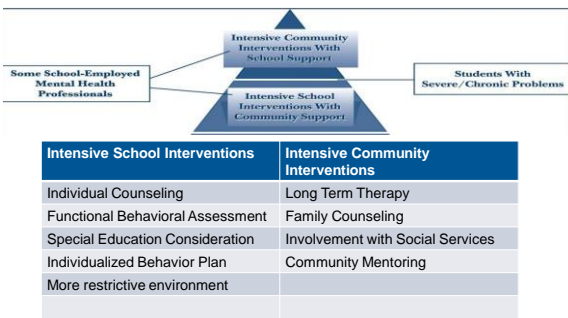
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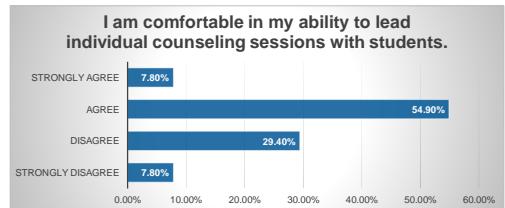
Intensive Interventions



Intensive School and Community Supports



Nebraska Data



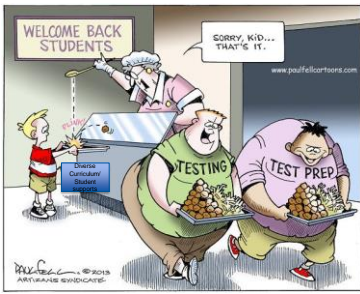
Role of the School Psychologist

- School Psychologists **should be the leading mental health experts in schools** who are knowledgeable about development in social, affective, and adaptive domains.

Barriers to School Mental Health Services

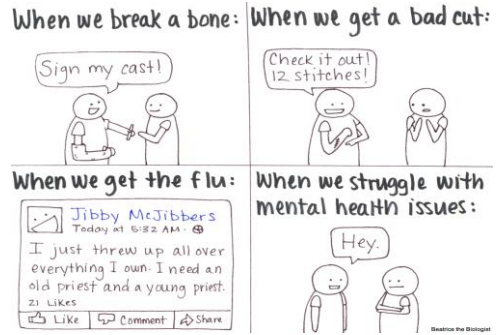


**Ψ** Competing Priorities



\*\* Edited.

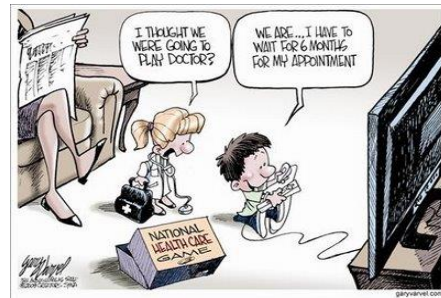
**Stigma/Lack of Understanding**



**Ψ** (Lack of) Funding



**Ψ** Shortages



**Consequences of Ignoring the Issue**

**Systemic/Societal**

- School to Prison Pipeline
- Homelessness
- Decreased rates of high school graduation/college completion
- Increased Incarceration
- Stagnant progress in reducing school and community violence
- Economic Impact

**Individuals**


- Decreased achievement
- Poor social skills
- Substance abuse
- Low Self Esteem
- Suicidal Ideation
- Increased engagement in risky behaviors
- Suspension/Expulsion
- Decreased earnings



 Your Voice Matters



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 School Mental Health: Who is Influencing the Conversation

- School administrators
- School psychologists/counselors/social workers
- Community agencies
- Private practitioners (Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Psychologists etc.)
- Juvenile Justice
- The Media
- Celebrities

How do Others Perceive School Psychologists?



Do decision makers know how you help:

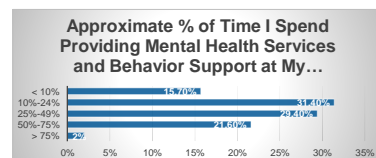
- Meet the needs of students at-risk for school failure?
- Ensure safe school environments?
- Improve school-family-community collaboration?
- Contribute to improved school climate?
- Lower or prevent barriers to learning?
- Facilitate data-based decision making at the individual/classroom/building/district levels?
- Provide guidance on realigning services to enhance academic progress?

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Nebraska Data



Nebraska Data





**Advocacy: What is my role as a school psychologist?**

Ethical Obligation: "to speak up on behalf of students that cannot speak for themselves"

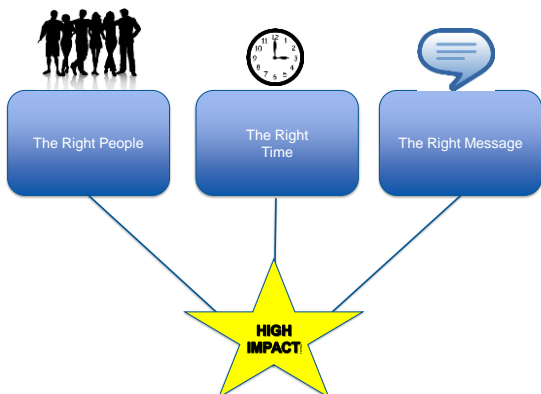
Legal Obligation: Somewhat unclear

Ethical requirements are not legal requirements of school-based employees (Zirkel, 2009)

**So....what CAN I do?**

**Key Legal Cases:**

- Pickering vs. Board of Education of Township High School District 205 (1968)
  - private citizens can speak on matters of public concern without being dismissed from their position
- Garcetti vs. Ceballos (2006)
  - A public employee's speech is only protected if it is expressed as a private citizen and in no way reflected as the employee's public and professional duties
- Settlegoode vs. Portland Public Schools (2004)
  - teachers need to speak out on school matters because of the level of informed opinions they have about the best interests of the children that are in their building



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**What did our work used to look like?**



Dr. Karl Oyen  
1,131 Retweets

**Participate in Social Media!**

- 👍 "Like NASP on Facebook"
- 🐦 "Follow" @nasonline on Twitter
- # Use the hashtag #NASPadvocates
- 📷 "Follow" nasonline

<https://tinyurl.com/yc6gzuuf>

**NASP Advocacy Social Media Guide**

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**Why Social Media Matters....**

- Every senator and most representatives currently utilize Twitter
- Can reach a wider audience with your message
- Social media is an increasingly used tool to get desired public policy results
- Helps to tell YOUR STORY to DECISION-MAKERS
- Done well, social media messages can help you engage supporters, capturing and retaining their attention

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### Tier 1 Social Media



- Connect with state association/NASP
- Follow stakeholder groups
- Share out helpful resources
- Convey key ideas about what's good for kids and how school psychologists can help



### Tier 2 Social media



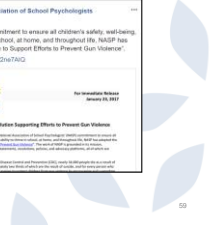
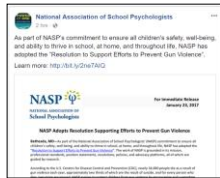
- Follow key school board members and state legislators
- Thank those via tweet that do something positive
- Share key messages on issues under consideration/of importance
- Convey/ask how school psychologists can help
  - (Be sure that you don't violate any district social media policies for staff)



### Tier 3: Social media



- Share out key resources
- Retweet supporting messages and valid third-party resources
- Pay attention to stakeholder posts and tweets



### Elbow Partner Talk

- What are ways that you can engage with universal communication strategies?
- What is one resource that you might share from the NASP website?
- What is one stakeholder that you can engage with within 2 weeks?
- What are barriers that get in the way of universal communication?



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### Key Takeaways



- School psychologists are uniquely qualified to develop comprehensive support systems, provide direct and indirect services, and expand access
- Barriers exist, but we can overcome them!
- Current public policy presents significant opportunities for school psychologists to do what we do best.....improve outcomes for students

### Contact Information

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