

MSPA 2008 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Minnesota School Psychologists Association: Mission Statement

To proactively support the needs and well-being of all children, youth, families and communities through advocacy, education, and research; And to promote the delivery of comprehensive, effective, and ethical school psychological services.

What are School Psychologists and What Do they Do?

School psychologists are highly trained in psychology, education, assessment, and intervention. School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students that strengthen connections between home, school, and community. School psychologists use evidence-based methods to approach educational problems at the individual and systems level. Additionally, school psychologists are highly trained to collect and analyze data to inform system-wide interventions, program efficacy, curriculum decisions, and student mastery of academic content.

Purpose:

The purpose of the 2008 Legislative Platform is to support MSPA's mission statement by establishing the Association's priorities for the upcoming legislative session. This Platform provides a framework for MSPA's legislative efforts. This Platform will not list every issue about which the Association is concerned or in which it is involved; rather, the Platform will describe those issues that the Executive Board, the Legislative Committee, and MSPA membership deem to be MSPA's priority issues for the 2008 Legislative session.

Priority Issues for the 2008 Legislative Session

- Ψ Ensuring student access to Student Support Services including comprehensive psychological services (pre-K through 12+), enhancing collaboration with other Student Support Services, and solidifying increased funding and resources for Student Support Services
- Ψ Recognizing school psychologists as mental health professionals due to their evaluation, consultation, and intervention training and competencies
- Ψ Extending systems-wide intervention models including Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Ψ Promoting culturally competent educational practices including intervention, data collection, and analysis
- Ψ Maintaining the integrity of competencies required to practice as a school psychologist and receive full licensure through the MN State Board of Teaching to work within schools
- Ψ Supporting full governmental funding of special education services for all students addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, ages birth to 21

1. **MSPA supports...** Comprehensive student psychological services in schools that help children become ready to learn, willing and able, present and participating. These include both physical and mental health services that enable children to benefit more fully from curriculum and instruction. These services to children require fully funded student support services, including teams of school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, school nurses, and school chemical health workers.
2. **MSPA supports...** That School Psychologists are skilled professionals in the provision of mental health services. These mental health services range from prevention to crisis response at the individual and system-wide level.
3. **MSPA supports...** Developing a continuum of academic supports for all students based on a Response to Intervention (RtI) model. These supports should rely on the use of data for determining instructional level, monitoring progress, and evaluating the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions.
4. **MSPA supports...** Developing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for all children at every school site as alternatives to more punitive or consequence-driven disciplinary strategies. This orientation recognizes social/behavioral learning as a viable educational pursuit.
5. **MSPA supports...** educational practices that reduce biases in decision making due to differences in linguistic, cultural, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds. We support legislative initiatives that reduce the overrepresentation of minority students in special education and increase the funding for services available to English Language Learners.
6. **MSPA supports...** The recruitment and training of new school psychologists, particularly minority psychologists, so that our profession reflects the composition of the communities we serve.
7. **MSPA supports...** That practitioners of psychology in the schools must have a graduate degree in School Psychology from a National Association of School Psychologists-approved program (or possess the Nationally Certified School Psychologist credential) and be licensed by the state board of teaching. We support legislation and regulatory action to ensure the above requirements are maintained.
8. **MSPA supports...** That multiple indicators of achievement best measure a student's academic proficiency. Poor performance on a single measure of achievement, including high stakes tests and individual classes, should not be the sole determining factor in withholding a diploma.
8. **MSPA supports...** Full funding of special education services age birth to 21 by both federal and state governments. Cross subsidies should not be an issue to be dealt with by local school districts because of inadequate federal and state funding.

For additional information, contact

Olivia Melroe, MSPA President (melroe@mnstate.edu)

Ralph Maves, MSPA Lobbyist (rdm2490@aol.com)

Heidi Springborg, MSPA Legislative Committee Chair (heidispring@gmail.com)

MSPA 2008 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM