



**Introduction to the Standards for the
Preparation and Practice of School
Psychologists**

Conceptual Framework for the Preparation and Practice of School Psychologists

A school psychologist preparation program should reflect the ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple services. Competency requires demonstration of the integration of knowledge and skills throughout the Domains of Professional Practice. The domains are:

1. Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Intervention and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills
4. Intervention and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills
5. School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning
6. Preventive and Responsive Services
7. Family-Collaboration Services
8. Diversity in Development and Learning
9. Research and Program Evaluation
10. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

A recommendation for school psychologist certification is an assurance on the part of the educator preparation institution that a candidate demonstrates the appropriate competencies specified in the standards.

Introduction to the Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Psychologists

Purpose

The purpose of the *Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Psychologists* is to establish a shared vision for the content and skills that school psychologists in Michigan should possess and be able to demonstrate in their practice. These standards were created using national standards for school psychologists and to support the Top 10 in 10 Strategic Goal 3 to “develop, support, and sustain a high-quality, prepared, and collaborative education workforce.” This set of standards will replace the roles and competencies previously identified in administrative rules and will guide the preparation and practice of school psychologists.

This section of the document provides background about the development of the standards, presented as domains of professional performance expected of individuals entering the field after preparation. These standards promote the roles of school psychologists, establish outcomes for graduates of school psychologist preparation programs, and inform program development and continuous improvement efforts at Michigan’s educator preparation institutions. These standards are based upon the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Standards and incorporate the same elements and performance indicators used by NASP for recognition and accreditation decisions.

Development of the Proposal

The School Psychologist Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from Michigan's school psychologist preparation program providers and P-12 practitioners, created Michigan's school psychologist preparation and practice standards beginning in November of 2016. This action was motivated by transitions in the profession as well as feedback from the field indicating that current Michigan rules and competencies for school psychologists were outdated.

Historically, Michigan has not had stand-alone standards for school psychology. Instead, the roles and competencies of school psychologists had been identified and defined in the Administrative Rules for School Psychology. In the 2017 Administrative Rules update, the roles and competencies for school psychologists were removed so that Michigan could adopt state standards consistent with the current expectations and roles of K-12 school psychologists and allow for those standards to grow and change over time with the field's needs.

The *Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Psychologists* have been created to address changes in the school environment and to better reflect the current expectations for school psychologists, including competency in:

- Prevention and intervention work at a variety of levels (district, school, classroom, small group, individual student) to promote positive social-emotional and academic outcomes among students.
- Consultation about and implementation of curriculum-based approaches to academic assessment, and functional approaches to behavioral assessment.
- Collection, interpretation and use of data for a variety of purposes beyond just determining special education eligibility, such as for the purposes of universal screening, instructional and intervention planning, evaluating fidelity of intervention implementation, monitoring of student progress, and evaluation of intervention effects.
- Evaluation and adaptation of these assessment and intervention practices such that they are responsive to the needs of, and effective for, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Summary of Public Comments

These standards were submitted for SBE review at its April 10, 2018 meeting. The presentation was followed by a period of public comment through May 6, 2018. A total of 96 responses were submitted, 76 of which were from certified school psychologist. The remaining 20 comments were provided by K-12 administrators, ISA/ESA personnel, parents, institutions of higher education, directors/supervisors of special education, a speech and language pathologist, and an ISD board member. Sixty-eight respondents support the standards without any changes, while 19 of those who weighed in support the standards with "minor revisions". These two groups ("support" and "support with minor revisions") comprise 91% of all respondents. Only one survey taker was "against" the standards while three were "neutral" and five suggested "significant revisions".

Some common themes emerged from the comments. As mentioned above, the responses show overwhelming support for the proposed standards. The backing of the standards was shared by school psychologist, administrators, other school personnel, and institutions of higher education. One school psychologist noted, "...these standards provide a beautiful depiction of the ideal roles/responsibilities of a school psychologist." Another school psychologist feels, "the proposed changes will benefit districts across the State of Michigan and the students and families with whom school psychologists work."

Similar sentiments to the following were shared throughout the survey, "I am in full support of the proposed standards for the preparation and practice of school psychologists in the state of Michigan ...the fields of school psychology and education are ever-evolving and by adopting these standards, it will make it possible to keep up with the changes in mental health and educational support in our schools."

Some comments focused on specific components of the proposed standards. One parent noted, "I am particularly in support of standards 3-5 [3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills, 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills, and 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning]. In the current culture and environment of schools in Michigan, I believe that this type of training and overlapping skills will be most helpful to those students who need it." One ISD Director of Special Education commented, "Well thought out and includes areas that are currently relevant to the changed role of School Psychologist. In particular, I like the emphasis on prevention [Standard 6] activities especially as it pertains to reading/learning." Another survey responder noted, "I agreed with the standards for being proactive and intervention focused."

Additionally, a total of 24 respondents commended the standards for their alignment to national standards. One school psychologist put it this way, "as long as the standards meet or exceed the NASP criteria, the state will be well served." One school psychologist touted the importance of aligning to national standards given "NASP's significant and painstaking efforts to ensure the highest of standards for school psychologists and the practice of school psychology."

While a large majority of responses were in favor of the proposed standards without modification, 19 respondents selected the "support with minor revisions" survey option. Of the 19, five did not offer any open field comments. The majority of the others pointed to challenges facing the profession but did not note explicit suggestions on how the proposed standards should be modified. Most notably, while the proposed standards received widespread praise for the preparation of future school psychologists, some concerns were raised regarding the broad scope of practice and shortage of practitioners. Performing a wide range of roles and responsibilities, while having a limited number of school psychologists, poses challenges for Michigan schools. One school psychologist put it this way, "The training and practice standards that have been developed are excellent; however, when school psychologists are spread so thin that there is not enough time to practice the myriad of skills we have, schools, families, and students suffer."

Some respondents stated schools and districts do not properly utilize school psychologists, and current student to school psychologist ratios prevent school psychologist from performing the full range of roles and responsibilities identified in the proposed standards. "Being prepared for all is appropriate but please know that

many ISD/districts will not allow/strongly discourage school [psychologist] from doing half these roles," commented one respondent. Several survey takers noted that challenges are exacerbated when schools do not have adequate financial resources or budgets to support the human capacity required to perform the full ranges of school psychologist services. A District Special Education Supervisor noted, "With the current economic environment surrounding public education, the role of the school psychologist has been significantly reduced to that of evaluator and report writer."

Similar concerns were expressed by the few individuals who approved of standards but felt "significant" changes were necessary. "... we have the training to do it all," one school psychologist submitted, "yet we are... narrowly utilized in schools. Half of this training will go unused." Another individual, noting the shortage of school psychologists, said, "[standards] revisions suggested are more about ensuring sufficient numbers to accommodate the broadening of responsibilities." The shortage of school psychologists weighed heavily on the minds of some respondents and is evident in this comment, "There are not enough school psychologists to meet the need in schools today, so we are stretched thin and must use most of our time to complete special [education] evaluations, attend IEP's, and complete the mandated paperwork."

One school psychologist noted that too much professional development is required while another expressed a desire for more training in areas like MTSS, SWPBIS, functional behavior assessments, and IEP systems. Another school psychologist expressed anxiety that her out-of-state preparation did not adequately cover all the roles and responsibilities she may be required to perform under the proposed standards.

The lone individual who indicated he/she was against the proposed standards felt current school psychologists are already knowledgeable and current standards are adequate. The individual felt programs needed to do a better job of "weed[ing] out" individuals who do not "fit on the personality side". The three neutral respondents did not provide comments.

While several survey participants pointed out some of the challenges the profession faces, no changes were made to the proposed standards as a result of the overwhelmingly supportive comments received.

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Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Psychologists

Standard 1: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability

School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and methods of assessment and data collection for identifying strengths and needs, developing effective services and programs, and measuring progress and outcomes. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to use psychological and educational assessment, data collection strategies, and technology resources and apply results to design, implement, and evaluate direct interventions, psychological services, and programs.

- **Standard 1.1**

Candidates will use the problem-solving framework as the basis for all practices.

- **Standard 1.2**

Candidates will systematically collect data from multiple sources and use ecological factors as the context for all assessment and intervention decisions.

- **Standard 1.3**

Candidates will use assessment data to understand students' problems and to implement evidence-based instructional, mental, and behavioral health services.

- **Standard 1.4**

Candidates will use data to analyze progress toward meeting academic and behavioral goals.

- **Standard 1.5**

Candidates will evaluate treatment fidelity of student interventions.

- **Standard 1.6**

Candidates will evaluate the effectiveness and/or need for modifications to school-based interventions or programs.

- **Standard 1.7**

Candidates will conduct valid and reliable assessments for the purpose of identifying student's eligibility for special education services.

- **Standard 1.8**

Candidates will administer multiple types of assessment instruments, including norm-referenced instruments, criterion-referenced instruments, observations, checklists, interview, and curriculum-based assessments and measures.

Standard 2: Consultation and Collaboration

School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, schools and systems, and methods to promote effective implementation of services. As part of a systematic and comprehensive process of effective decision making and problem solving that permeates all aspects of service delivery, school psychologists demonstrate skills to consult, collaborate, and communicate effectively with others.

- **Standard 2.1**

Candidates will demonstrate a consultative problem-solving process for planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional, and mental and behavioral health services

- **Standard 2.2**

Candidates will demonstrate effective communication and collaboration among families, teachers, community agencies, or others.

- **Standard 2.3**

Candidates will use consultation and collaboration when working at the individual, classroom, school, or systems levels.

- **Standard 2.4**

Candidates will advocate for needed change at the individual student, classroom, building, district, state, or national levels.

Standard 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills

School psychologists have knowledge of biological, cultural, and social influences on academic skills; human learning, cognitive, and developmental processes; and evidence-based curricula and instructional strategies. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, demonstrate skills to use assessment and data collection methods and to implement and evaluate services that support cognitive and academic skills.

- **Standard 3.1**

Candidates will implement evidence-based psychological and educational interventions to improve student engagement and learning.

- **Standard 3.2**

Candidates will use assessment data to develop and implement evidence-based instructional strategies that will improve student performance.

- **Standard 3.3**

Candidates will collaborate with other school personnel in program planning and evaluation services to ensure attainment of state and local benchmarks for students.

- **Standard 3.4**

Candidates will communicate information about evidence-based practices related to curriculum and instructional strategies.

- **Standard 3.5**

Candidates will design and implement instructional support and assessment systems such as response to intervention and curriculum-based assessment and measurement.

- **Standard 3.6**

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies for diverse learners that meet individual needs.

Standard 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills

School psychologists have knowledge of biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on behavior and mental health, behavioral and emotional impacts on learning and life skills, and evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional functioning, and mental and behavioral health. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, demonstrate skills to use assessment and data collection methods and to implement and evaluate services that support socialization, learning, and mental and behavioral health.

- **Standard 4.1**

Candidates will provide a continuum of mental and behavioral health services such as group counseling, behavioral coaching, positive behavioral supports, and parent education.

- **Standard 4.2**

Candidates will facilitate the design and delivery of curricula to help students develop effective social and life skills such as self-regulation, planning, organization, empathy, social skills, and decision making.

- **Standard 4.3**

Candidates will conduct functional behavioral assessments for the purpose of understanding behavior.

- **Standard 4.4**

Candidates will develop and facilitate implementation of behavior change programs at individual, group, classroom, or school-wide levels.

- **Standard 4.5**

Candidates will evaluate evidence-based interventions to improve individual student social, emotional, or behavioral wellness.

Standard 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning

School psychologists have knowledge of school and systems structure, organization, and theory; general and special education; technology resources; and evidence-based school practices that promote learning and mental and behavioral health. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, demonstrate skills to develop and implement practices and strategies to create and maintain effective and supportive learning environments for children and others.

- **Standard 5.1**

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of universal screening to identify students in need of instructional and behavioral support services.

- **Standard 5.2**

Candidates will collaborate with other school personnel to create and maintain a multi-tiered continuum of services to support academic, social, emotional, and behavioral goals for students.

- **Standard 5.3**

Candidates will advocate for policies and practices that promote positive school environments.

Standard 6: Preventive and Responsive Services

School psychologists have knowledge of principles and research related to resilience and risk factors in learning and mental health, services in schools and communities to support multi-tiered prevention, and evidence-based strategies for effective crisis response. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, demonstrate skills to promote services that enhance learning, mental and behavioral health, safety, and physical well-being through protective and adaptive factors and to implement effective crisis preparation, response, and recovery.

- **Standard 6.1**

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of risk and protective factors related to problems such as school dropout, truancy, bullying, youth suicide, and school violence.

- **Standard 6.2**

Candidates will develop, implement, and evaluate prevention and intervention programs that address learning and behavior problems.

- **Standard 6.3**

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of school crisis prevention and response.

- **Standard 6.4**

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of programs that promote safe and violence-free schools and communities.

Standard 7: Family–School Collaboration Services

School psychologists have knowledge of principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, and culture; evidence-based strategies to support family influences on children’s learning and mental and behavioral health; and strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools. School psychologists, in collaboration with others, demonstrate skills to design, implement, and evaluate services that respond to culture and context and facilitate family and school partnerships and interactions with community agencies for enhancement of academic and social–behavioral outcomes for children.

- **Standard 7.1**

Candidates will engage with parents in decision-making about their children.

- **Standard 7.2**

Candidates will promote respect and appropriate services for students with cultural and linguistic differences.

- **Standard 7.3**

Candidates will promote strategies for safe and nurturing home environments.

- **Standard 7.4**

Candidates will support positive interactions among schools, families, and community agencies.

Standard 8: Diversity in Development and Learning

School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse student characteristics; principles and research related to diversity factors for children, families, and schools, including factors related to culture, context, and individual and role difference; and evidence-based strategies to enhance services and address potential influences related to diversity. School psychologists provide professional services that promote effective functioning for individuals, families, and schools with diverse characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds and across multiple contexts. Understanding and respect for diversity in development and learning, and advocacy for social justice, are foundations for all aspects of service delivery.

- **Standard 8.1**
Candidates will consider individual differences, strengths, backgrounds, and needs in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all services.
- **Standard 8.2**
Candidates will demonstrate knowledge of linguistic and cultural differences for addressing the needs of English language learners.
- **Standard 8.3**
Candidates will use assessment data to develop appropriate academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health goals for students with diverse abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, strengths, and needs.
- **Standard 8.4**
Candidates will promote fairness and social justice in school policies and programs.

Standard 9: Research and Program Evaluation

School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings. School psychologists demonstrate skills to evaluate and apply research as a foundation for service delivery and, in collaboration with others, use various techniques and technology resources for data collection, measurement, and analysis to support effective practices at the individual, group, and/or systems levels.

- **Standard 9.1**
Candidates will use research findings as the foundation for effective service delivery.
- **Standard 9.2**
Candidates will collect or examine data to evaluate services at the individual, group, and systems levels.
- **Standard 9.3**
Candidates will assist teachers in collecting meaningful student data.
- **Standard 9.4**
Candidates will evaluate the fidelity and effectiveness of school-based intervention plans.

Standard 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists. School psychologists demonstrate skills to provide services consistent with ethical, legal, and professional standards; engage in responsive ethical and professional decision-making; collaborate with other professionals; and apply professional work characteristics needed for effective practice as school psychologists.

- **Standard 10.1**

Candidates are knowledgeable of current ethical and professional standards, and legal regulations.

- **Standard 10.2**

Candidates will assist parents, administrators, and other school personnel in understanding general and special education regulations.

- **Standard 10.3**

Candidates will engage in professional development for continued life-long learning.

- **Standard 10.4**

Candidates will use supervision and mentoring to improve service delivery.