



# THE TEXAS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Newsletter of the Texas Association  
of School Psychologists

<http://www.txasp.org>

Affiliate of the National Association of School Psychologists

Vol. 12

No. 1

Fall 2004

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## President's Corner

*Andrea Ogonosky, Ph.D., NCSP, LSSP*

Welcome back! I love the beginning of the school year with the hustle and bustle that fills the air! I enjoy walking around the halls of school preparing for the first day when the students will arrive. Of course there are workshops to give or attend, offices to prepare, folders to review, time to reconnect with old friends and make some new ones. This is my favorite time of year. I enjoy returning refreshed from some summer down time with renewed optimism for the upcoming school year. As you are preparing your calendars for the fall semester be sure to reserve November 4-6 for a trip to San Antonio and the TASP conference. TASP Conference Chair Robb Matthews and President-Elect Al Mayo having been working hard with committee chairs in organizing what promises to be a conference filled with great information along with opportunities for networking, fellowship, and

fun! The TASP executive board continues to work hard to promote our profession, work with our legislature and build our organization's infrastructure. Being a part of this organization's executive board has provided ample opportunities for me to grow both professionally and personally. I ask you to consider volunteering in some capacity to serve on the board or on one of our committees. You will have plenty of opportunities to discuss your professional ideas and find out more about the differing committees during our conference. Al Mayo and I will be attending the NASP Southeast Regional Meeting in New Orleans at the end of October. It is my continued hope that through this newsletter we communicate to you the many activities the TASP board members are involved with throughout the state and nation in an effort to continue promoting the profession of school psychology. Now take a few minutes to grab a cup of coffee, sit back, and enjoy the newsletter! See you in San Antonio!

## Editor's Note

Dana Goins, LSSP

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

**The Editor:**

Dana Goins  
204 Ivy ST  
Deer Park TX 77536  
(832) 867-5051  
e-mail: dgoins@dpisd.org

*Deadline for receipt of material by the Editor*

No. 1 Fall ..... July 30  
No. 2 Special Online Conference Update Edition ..... Dec. 1  
No. 3 Spring ..... April 15

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**Classified Rates**

There is no charge for Employment Notices. The rate for any other advertising is \$2.00 per line. The minimum order is four lines and each line contains about 60 characters. The charge for a full page ad is \$100.00, half page ad is \$60.00 and a quarter page ad is \$35.00. All advertising must be prepaid. No frequency or agency discounts apply. To submit copy, and/or for other classify/display advertising rates and information, contact: Dana Goins; 1001 Sharie St; Deer Park, TX 77536; Phone: (832) 668-7144; Email: dgoins@dpisd.org.

**Advertising Deadlines**

Camera ready artwork or Employment Notices must be received prior to deadline date for desired publication. All camera-ready artwork and notices must be on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. It is recommended that response deadlines in advertisements be no earlier than the 15th of the month following the month of publication.

### **Texas State University - San Marcos School Psychology Program**

TSU offers a specialist level, Master of Arts Program in School Psychology, accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The program endorses the scientist-practitioner training model and leads to institutional recommendation for certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) by NASP and for licensure as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. TSU also offers a Respecialization Program for individuals who already hold a Master's degree in a related field and wish to re-specialize in the area of school psychology.

**For more information, please contact:**

Cynthia Plotts, Ph.D.  
Coordinator, School Psychology Program  
Southwest Texas State University  
601 University Drive  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
(512) 245-3086  
(512) 245-8872 (Fax)  
Visit our web site at: [www.eaps.us/](http://www.eaps.us/)

## TSBEP Update

Brad Shields

The State Psychologists Board met in late July under the direction of chairman Art Hernandez. Once again, TASP was the only organization in the audience. The following are topics of interest discussed at the meeting.

**LSSP Shortage....** Stephanie Sokolosky continued her discussion of the shortage of LSSPs available to school districts and asked TASP to provide any data available as to the number and distribution of LSSPs in Texas. She also would like to publish a list of existing or pending LSSP programs in Texas in the next State Board newsletter.

TPA had invited a representative of the board to attend their annual meeting and Art Hernandez has agreed to attend. The Board asked if TASP would like someone to attend our meeting in November. I told them I would ask the TASP board.

**Sunset....** Dr. Hernandez reported on the Sunset Commission meeting that adopted final recommendations for next session's legislation. He was disappointed that the final recommendations included the elimination of the oral exams and hoped the final bill could be amended to remove that provision. It will fall upon TPA and TASP to work on that issue next session. The Board also feels that some of the Sunset recommendations will make it harder for Texas residents to obtain a license and easier for out of state applicants.

**Rules....** One rule was proposed to make it possible for licensees to extend their inactive status one time, and the board adopted one rule that affected regionally approved CE credit hours. The Board announced that it was going to do a complete review of all rules pertaining to Continuing Education.

**Budget....** The board will submit its legislative appropriations request to the Legislative Board with an initial 5% cut from existing funding.

**Jurisprudence Exam....** There has been a consultant group discussing the jurisprudence exam and has recommended that examinees be given the average passage rate for first time takers so that they will work harder to pass. (The passage rate for first timers in 2003 was 80%.)

Board Officers... Art Hernandez was re-elected to a second term as chairman citing the need to have an experienced board member to serve during the next legislative session. Newly appointed member Pauline Clancy, Ed.D. (Houston ISD) was re-elected as vice-chair.

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## Graduate Student Report

Jodi Odom

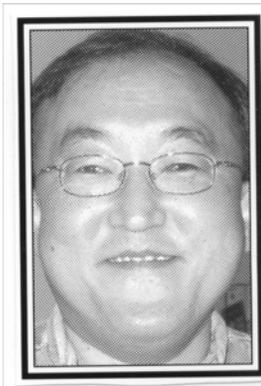
Welcome back everyone! I hope you had a restful and relaxing summer. I know I did! I would like to tell you about a few things that TASP has coming up this fall. But before that, I want to let you know that I have started my internship at Hays Consolidated Independent School District. I am so excited and yes, a little nervous! As a new employee and a school psychology intern, everyday is a new day of learning and experiences for me. But, I want to say that everyone at Hays CISD has been so welcoming, extremely supportive, and beyond helpful. I look forward to my days at Hays because it is "a place where ideas grow". Now, back to business. TASP has a handful of things coming up. We are getting ready for the annual TASP conference in November. For all you graduate students and interns out there, here is a preview of what to expect at the conference. The BASC- II, the KABC- II, ethics, emotional disturbance, traumatic brain injury, sunset review, and more! I want to say thank you to all of the graduate students and interns who completed the needs assessment I sent you this summer. Your input will point me in the right direction for the presentation topics at our graduate student, intern meeting. I mentioned in my last letter to you, but I want to refresh your memory that at that meeting a drawing will take place and one student/intern will have the chance to win their entire conference fee to be paid for. I think that is pretty exciting! Also, at the conference there are going to be mixers that you can attend and mingle with LSSP's from all across Texas! And finally, we will be electing a new graduate student representative at the conference this year. That person will be a voting member of TASP, have an active role in the organization and strengthening of TASP, and you can really connect with your fellow school psychologists. Nominations for the next TASP graduate student representative are due to me by September 3<sup>rd</sup> and a short bio of yourself is due to me by September 15<sup>th</sup>. You can email me nominations and the bio to [jlodom@hotmail.com](mailto:jlodom@hotmail.com). Again, welcome back to school and I hope you have a great year!



## Webmaster Report

*Francis Chen, Webmaster*

Greetings to all the TASP members! I hope everyone enjoyed their summer. I recently received an email letting me know about “old” links and “old” information. I am hoping that you all will be able to help me out with this situation.



I would encourage you to send me links that you feel will be appropriate and applicable to your colleagues and fellow members of TASP. I know that we will be having links to our Area Representatives and you may contact them to get the word out. There may be a “knockout” website in the West Texas area but not only would that area folks possibly benefit, but there may be information that others all over the state (and out of state) may find useful!

I would like to solicit input on possible topics for listservs. I used to think, we don’t need to reinvent the wheel and with that, avoid listserv content that NASP already has, but I think it would be helpful to have similar topics with a Texas (TASP) flavor!

For the first time, we will have reports from our conference in a special online issue of the Texas School Psychologist in December.

[www.txasp.org](http://www.txasp.org)

Contact your Area Representative and always feel free to contact me. Thank you.

## Treasurer’s Report

*Cindy Lawrence*

Financial activity for the period from July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004 are presented below:

Beginning cash 50,483.01

### Revenue

Membership Dues	28,880.00
Convention	69,114.25
CALC Donations	535.00
GPR Donations	375.00
Interest	102.56

Total Revenue 99,006.81

### Expenses

Awards	357.05
CALC Donation	525.00
Clerical	5,418.95
Convention Expenses	28,499.68
Equipment	2,502.99
Miscellaneous Expenses	2,733.97
Operating Expenses	1,188.35
Profession & Service Fees	
17,816.03	
Postage	1,153.71
Printing	2,313.15
Supplies	1,218.22
Travel	14,627.90

Total Expenses 78,355.00

Revenue in Excess of Expenses  
20,651.81

Ending Cash 71,134.82

The Children’s Assistance for Living Committee has chosen The Rainbow Room for the service project. The Rainbow Room’s motto is, “Abused and neglected children do not deserve abused and neglected things.” The Rainbow Room assists families with basic needs that help keep them together through traumatic times. In addition, it also supplies CPS caseworkers with items for children who are removed from the home

Items needed are diapers, formula, new children’s clothing, school supplies, personal hygiene items, toys/children’s books, blankets, etc. We will be accepting items or cash donations at the conference.

## **Mayo and Martinez attend the NASP Public Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.**

*Dyanna Martinez*

In June, Al Mayo (president-elect) and I had the privilege of representing TASP at the NASP Public Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. Participants from each state received training to address policy and practice challenges at the local and national level. Our hands-on training concluded with an assignment to meet with our representatives on Capitol Hill. Al and I visited the offices Senators Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX), John Cornyn (R-TX), and our House of Representatives Member. (The Congress was out on recess for an early Fourth of July break so we did not get a chance to meet them personally.) We set appointments to meet with the legislative assistants that worked on education and mental health issues from each office. An important part of our visit was taking the time to sit down and talk about what school psychologists (LSSP's) do for children in schools. Although the staff was familiar with the proposed IDEA legislation, they knew few details on how school psychologists played a role in it. For example, they heard about the proposed revisions to the Manifestation Determination and Review (MDR) process, but they did not know that school psychologists conducted FBA's to help with this process. We were also able to explain how MDR's function to protect children with disabilities, and while there is room for change; some type of modified version should remain in the law (the House version eliminates MDR's). There is also a drive in legislation to provide additional funds for prevention efforts. In our discussion we were able to relay to the staff how school psychologists serve all children, not only those identified in special education. We explained how we are a resource to our schools, and why it is important to include us in the IDEA legislation. (By the way, we are considered "related service personnel under IDEA, and "pupil service personnel" under NCLB.) After highlighting several key pieces of legislation, we left them with an informational packet of the areas we discussed, then gave them our contact information and thanked them for their time. For two out of the three offices, it was the first time a school psychologist had ever visited.

From this training, I learned that there are a lot of issues being discussed that many of us are not even aware are taking place. While listing them all out is beyond the scope of this article, I do want to spark your interest in these topics so you can find out about them in more detail. With regard to IDEA reauthorization, a House-Senate

Conference committee must convene to reconcile the differences between the two bills. Due to politics and an upcoming election, the bill may not be voted on until after the November election. If they do not vote by then, it gets postponed until the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes in January 2005. The bad news if this happens is that the process starts all over again with both the House and Senate drafting new versions. In other legislation, both H.R. 1350 and S. 1248 remove language in current law that describes how states must maintain a "highly qualified" standard for related services personnel. This is an entry level standard in the state for professions such as school psychology. Removing this requirement may allow schools to hire under-qualified personnel. The Family Opportunity Act (passed only in the House) provides a Medicaid buy-in for families who cannot afford mental health care for their child. Loan Forgiveness for special education math and science teachers is proposed in H.R. 438/S. 110 and 1793. NASP encourages us to write in to offer these incentives to other related service personnel (i.e. LSSP's) that also serve children in special education. The Child Healthcare Crisis Relief Act (H.R. 1359 and S. 1223) addresses the national shortage of child's mental health professionals by encouraging more individuals to enter these fields. (Did you know that over 13.7 million children and adolescents are in need of treatment for emotional and behavioral disorders, but less than one in five ever receive it?\*) The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program (ESSCP) under NCLB is the only federal grant program that helps school districts hire more school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers. The Bush FY 2005 Budget eliminates this program.

The Congressional offices tally the number of letters they receive on a particular issue to gauge how their constituents (you) support or refute it. The more letters they receive, the more attention they give to it. NASP has the data on the number of members from Texas who wrote letters to their Members of Congress. Are you curious to know the results? Last year (2003), 231 messages were sent, but only 66 people were responsible for those messages. Sixty-six people, out of 745 registered NASP members in Texas are 9% of the total membership who sent letters.

Here's how simple it is to do, assuming you have Internet access. Here is how:

- 1) The NASP Advocacy Action Center can be viewed at [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org). (You do not have to be a member of NASP to access or write a letter on this site!)
- 2) Point to Advocacy/Public Policy.
- 3) Click on "NASP Advocacy", and then "Take Action Now-Advocacy Action Center".
- 4) Enter your zip code and your elected officials appear on the screen.

More details about specific legislation I have mentioned can also be viewed from the Advocacy Action Center under [Issues and Legislation](#). If you do not know what to write, you can choose from a pool of letters that talk about each piece of legislation. You can even revise the letter to make it more personal and send it right from your computer. When I followed the above directions, it only took me a minute and a half to send out one letter. With a process so easy, I encourage you take an important step to advocate for the children you work with at your school.

For any information regarding GPR issues, or if you would like to assist with GPR committee, please contact me at [dyannamartinez@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dyannamartinez@sbcglobal.net).

### State Updates

The possible consolidation of our licensing board, TSBE, is still on hold until other mental health agencies are reviewed. A final recommendation from the Sunset Advisory Commission is due out in December.

TEA is still undergoing their Sunset review. The Sunset Advisory Commission has public testimony scheduled for December 14-15, 2004. Specific times should be available at [www.sunset.state.tx.us](http://www.sunset.state.tx.us) a few weeks prior to this date.

*\* Data from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)*

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## Reflections from a Past-President

*Carol Booth, Ph.D., NCSP, LSSP*

In my final months as the Past-President of the Texas Association of School Psychologists, I now realize that I am approaching the end of the more than ten years of involvement in an organization that has come to be an integral part of my identity. I can remember my excitement and ambivalence when the first meeting was held in College Station to propose the formulation of this organization. Excited by the incredible optimism generated by this group who were convinced that we could shape the direction of school psychology services for children in the Texas schools, I definitely experienced doubts about our ability to take control of our profession since it seemed as if we had so far to go and so much to do. All I can say now is WOW-look how far we have come!

Our licensure status and the increased numbers of Licensed Specialists in School Psychology working in our schools have afforded us so many opportunities for our job roles to evolve. Many of my colleagues now expect to be selective in our job searches so that we can find settings where we can strengthen our interests and special expertise. We share

an immensely diverse range of job duties across the state despite that fact that for most of us assessment was our starting place in the profession. The quality of the day-to-day work environment has improved immeasurably. Although we may not everything that we want in order to do our jobs, few of us today are testing in the restroom or counseling while we walk the track (unless this is by choice). We've come a long way!

I remember when TASP took the stance that the LSSP would raise the bar for everyone and this has definitely happened. Our training programs have grown and improved at a rapid rate. It would be quite intimidating to me now if I were in graduate school. The quality of district training and other continuing education opportunities are also truly outstanding. When I look around the state, I am just overwhelmed by what I see LSSP's doing to assist children, parents, and schools. The knowledge and skills of our Texas LSSP's can be compared very favorably to school psychologists anywhere in the country.

Many of our colleagues are moving into administrative and leadership positions in our schools. School psychologists are now included when statewide discussions are held regarding the delivery of special services in the schools. We are definitely seeing that LSSP's are shaping the direction of school psychology and the quality of services to children in our state. People are actually asking our opinion about what should be done when changes are being considered. Inclusion now includes school psychologists.

It is now time for us to look to the future. Do we have TASP members willing to volunteer to serve as board members or volunteers who can assist in continuing our professional growth? Are we willing to move outside of our professional comfort zone? How will we respond to proposed changes in school psychology to a public health model versus a special education model? I no longer have doubts or feelings of ambivalence about our ability to meet the demands of change. I truly believe that school psychologists will grow and change beyond everyone's expectations if we maintain the strength and vitality that this professional organization provides us.

I thank all of you for the opportunity to have served with the TASP Executive Board. Please say yes if someone asks you to serve TASP. May this be your best school year ever.



THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

(Federal Tax ID # 74-2673792)

Initial and Renewal Membership Application

Dues are for July 1 to June 30 Annually

Name: Last First M.I. Title (Mrs/Mr/Dr etc.) Professional Title (i.e. LSSP)

Street Address: City: State: Zip:

Telephone Home: Work: Fax:

E-Mail Address: Place of Employment:

Please send the newsletter to me by email instead of a hard copy

Please do not print my address and phone number in the Texas Association of School Psychologists membership directory.

I am a current member of: (Circle all that apply) NASP APA TPA TPA-Div of Sch Psych TAPA

Please list the county in which you reside: and in which you work:

I am applying for membership in the following category (Circle choice): Renewal New Member

Please check the appropriate category of membership:

Professional Member

1. Regular Member (voting member) \$60.00

- (a) Currently functioning as a school psychologist
(b) Trained as a school psychologist and working as a consultant, supervisor or administrator
(c) Primarily engaged in training of school psychologists at a college or university

2. Retired (nonvoting member) \$40.00

- (a) One who was a regular member in good standing and has retired from the field of school psychology

3. Affiliate (nonvoting member) \$40.00

- (a) One who is trained or employed in a closely related field or profession, but does not meet the requirements for regular membership

Provisional Member

1. Trainee (voting member) \$30.00

- (a) has met the training requirements for the Texas school psychology credential and has been designated by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists to be of trainee status.

2. Student (voting member) \$25.00

- (a) One who is actively engaged (minimum of six semester hours or its equivalent per semester) in a program of psychology

I wish to donate to the Government Professional Relations Fund Amount:

I wish to donate to the Children's Assistance for Living Committee Amount:

Total:

I affirm that all of the information provided on this form is true and complete.

Signature Date

(Please fill in other side)

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## The Texas School Psychologist

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Make checks payable to TASP

or

Credit Card: (Visa & Mastercard ONLY) Card holder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TASP is a volunteer organization. If you would be willing to serve as a committee member on one of the following committees (check all that apply):

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Convention Planning</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Membership</b>               | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Nominations &amp; Elections</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Government &amp; Professional Relations</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Professional Development</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Newsletter &amp; Publications</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public Information and relations</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Awards &amp; Honors</b>      |   |

If you would be willing to be a candidate for an office for next year please check all that apply:

- President-Elect**     **Treasurer**     **Secretary**     **Area Representative**     **Graduate Student Representative**

Please send completed form, check, and all supportive materials as necessary to:

**TASP**  
**PO Box 141023**  
**Austin TX 78714-1023**

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## News from NASP

*Robb Matthews, NASP Delegate*

Things are hopping at NASP right now. Along with all the software upgrades over the last year, NASP has been able to expand e-services to the membership. If you have been to the website lately, I am sure you have noticed the cosmetic changes made to the members only section, among others. Of particular interest to Texas NASP members will be the "Communities" section of the website. This section will be taking over the functions of the list serves. There is a community for each state, interest group and committee. Members are eligible to join any community listed on their "members only" page. Some groups are restricted such as the "Executive Council" community, but all others are open for general membership. In addition to discussion forums, these communities will allow news postings, documents archiving and calendar postings.

Although redesigned, the "Members Only" section continues to allow searching for other members by using a variety of settings, get information on or register for upcoming NASP events (e.g., convention) and access NASP member services such as accessing PowerPoint presentations. If you haven't explored the site in a while, it would be well worth your time to check out the enhancements.

An important note about elections: NASP's electronic balloting process in the fall will require those wishing to participate in the

"primary" to have joined or renewed their membership by September 1, 2004 will be eligible to vote. If someone joins or renews after September 1, but before December 1, 2004 they will still be able to vote in the election. These dates are approximate and subject to change. Finally, be sure to look for the NASP booth at the TASP conference in San Antonio. We are expecting to have new NASP publications available to order as well as a menagerie of items to give away.

See you in San Antonio,  
Robb Matthews  
NASP Delegate



## Best Practices Hotline

This column is designed to address practice issues in the field of school psychology. Questions should be sent to: Ginger E. Gates, Ph.D., 1704 Heights Blvd., Houston, TX 77008.

### Question:

I have a disagreement with a friend about the length of time a person is an LSSP trainee. She says you have to be a trainee for a year. What do you think?

### Answer:

A trainee is an individual who has met the training requirements of TAC §463.9 and who have passed the National School Psychology Examination at the Texas cutoff score or above and who have been notified in writing of this status by the Board. These individuals may practice under supervision in a public school district for **no more than one calendar year**. They must be designated as trainees.

However, once the trainee has passed the jurisprudence exam and has been notified by the Board of their LSSP status, they are not technically a trainee. The individual does have to continue to receive supervision for a period of one academic year following licensure unless the individual also holds licensure as a psychologist in this state.

## Texas Woman's University

### School Psychology Graduate Programs

TWU offers three graduate programs in school psychology, Doctoral, Master's, and Respecialization. All programs are accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The doctorate in school psychology leads to licensure as a Psychologist or a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) and certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). The Master's in school psychology leads to licensure as a LSSP and certification as an NCSP. The Respecialization program is intended for those professionals who have a previous Master's degree in a related field and want to get the national NCSP and the Texas LSSP.

#### **For more information contact:**

Daniel C. Miller, Ph.D.  
Director, School Psychology Graduate Programs  
Texas Woman's University  
P.O. Box 425470  
Denton, Texas 76204  
(940) 898-2303 (Department Phone)  
(940) 898-2301 (Departmental Fax)

#### **Visit our new Web Page at:**

[www.twu.edu/as/psyphil/sppc/](http://www.twu.edu/as/psyphil/sppc/)

## Membership Committee Report

*Nancy Huth, NCSP, LSSP*

Welcome to the 2004-05 school year! I'm sure you are all off and running like everyone else trying to get organized and remembering how to turn on your computer before it "bytes" you.

Since the membership renewal notices went out in May, 278 members have either renewed or joined. We have 27 new members of that 278. Great!

Remember our goal is to have all 1500-odd LSSPs as members to show the Legislature that we are indeed a viable and vibrant force for the school children of Texas. Members, talk to your colleagues and urge them to join or renew.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, there are plans afoot to provide the newsletter to members via e-mail. Be sure to list your e-mail address on your new/renewal application so this service can be made available to you.

Our fall Professional Development Conference is coming up quickly. Remember, renewing your membership now helps us to plan better for the Conference. You should be very pleased with this year's presenters and workshops, as well as with the wonderful opportunity to meet and network with colleagues around the state.

Send in those dues now!

## Help Needed

The Texas Association of School Psychologists has leadership positions available for the 2005-2006. Positions to be filled include President-elect, Treasure-elect, and area representatives for Areas I, III, and V. If you are interested in joining a group of energetic and dynamic professionals in school psychology, please contact any member of the TASP Executive Board. These leadership positions will provide you with a professional network of friends and colleagues, access to "hot topics" and current information from Austin and Washington, travel (at no cost to you) to exciting Texas locations to attend TASP meetings three to four times per year, and opportunities to attend and work at the annual TASP professional development conference. In addition, you will have the opportunity to write a regular article for the Texas School Psychologist and receive NASP continuing education credit for your volunteer commitment to the state organization. Most importantly, you will have the experience of influencing the direction of school psychology in our state. Please consider donating your times and talents to TASP.

If you wish to nominate yourself or a friend for a position on our Executive Board, please contact Carol Booth at 832-386-1073 or [cbooth9@houston.rr.com](mailto:cbooth9@houston.rr.com) or [cbooth@galenaparkisd.com](mailto:cbooth@galenaparkisd.com).

## Assessment for Emotional Disturbance Eligibility

*Reprinted from The Texas School Psychologist (Newsletter for the Texas Association of School Psychologists)*

### Definition of Emotional Disturbance (ED)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 34CFR §300.7(b)(4) defines emotional disturbance (ED) as follows:

The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

- A. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or other health factors;
- B. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- C. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- D. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression;
- E. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes children who are schizophrenic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

The Commissioner's/SBOE Rules (TEC §89.1035(h)) simply endorse these federal criteria as the definition of ED without alteration: "A student with an emotional disturbance is one who has been determined to meet the criteria as defined in 34CFR §300.7(b)(4)."

(See Appendix D for full text from the "Guidelines for Emotional Disturbance: Technical Assistance Papers" from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation Agency (MHMRA) Joint Task Force on Emotional Disturbance for an in depth discussion of the ED definition.)

### Educational Need

The condition of ED is not sufficient in itself to qualify a student for special education services. A need for special education services must also be documented. That is, the child must have interventions that cannot be accomplished through remedial education or supplemental services.

The "Guidelines for Assessment of Emotional Disturbance: Technical Assistance Papers" offers the following suggestions for establishing educational need:

- A. Review referral data to identify areas in need of assessment, considering the student's academic, behavioral, and adaptive

behavior/developmental skills and performance. Discipline histories should be included in this information.

B. Assess the student in the following domains:

1. **Academic need.** A full educational battery establishing cognitive ability and achievement levels is necessary. Information should include skill levels, learning styles, and environment. If modifications to the instructional program are needed, strategies can be suggested to the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for inclusion in the individual educational plan (IEP).
2. **Behavioral need.** A comprehensive behavioral testing battery is necessary to establish one or all of the following: 1) areas of behavioral disabilities, 2) behavioral areas in need of remediation, and/or 3) discipline needs. Information about behaviors noted in the referral should include whether those behaviors adversely affect the student's performance so that he or she "cannot be adequately educated in the regular class," resulting in an educational need. Behavior rating scales, teacher and parent interviews, behavior checklists, discipline histories, and psychological data can and should be used to identify behaviors that adversely affect student performance.
3. **Adaptive Behavior/Developmental need.** If the student is immature for his or her age, adaptive behavior should be assessed using checklists, rating scales, parent interviews, etc.

### Guidelines for Assessment

A psychological evaluation is an evaluation of emotional, social, and behavioral status consistent with the terminology in IDEA. It is a part of the Comprehensive Individual Assessment (CIA) and not a report that exists separately. While there is flexibility in the actual format of an ED report, it still has to establish the presence of an emotional condition and make recommendations for positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports.

Assessment to determine any disability, including ED, requires "a team of qualified professionals and the parent" (34CFR §300.534(a)(1)), which would include a specialist in the area of emotional and behavioral problems. A "qualified" specialist would be a person who "has met SEA (state education agency)-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements" in the area that he or she is providing (assessment) services (34CFR §300.21). Ethical standards dictate that an evaluator use instruments and procedures that they are trained and certified to administer and interpret (TSBEP Ethical Standards). According to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP), "the assessment of emotional or behavioral disturbance, for educational purposes, using psychological techniques and procedures is considered the practice of psychology" (22TAC §465.38(1)(C)). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) no longer certifies individuals with a specialty in the area of school psychology (formerly certified by TEA as Associate School Psychologist or School Psychologist).

That certification/licensure duty has been transferred to TSBEP, the appropriate state licensing board for psychologists. In Texas, the Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) is the credential issued by TSBEP for the practice of psychology in the schools, including the assessment of ED for educational purposes (22TAC §465.38(2)). Because of their special expertise regarding emotional and behavioral problems, LSSP's should serve as a member of the team in school-based assessments of ED.

The specific referral questions and the developmental level of the child will determine the assessment protocol. For example, for older children, self-report rating scales may be appropriate where they would not be useful with very young children. In addition, the format for questions in the student, teacher, and parent interviews must be tailored to the referral issues and developmental level of the child. The ED assessment should address issues of duration, severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of problems compared to norms for peers of the same age and sex, as well as provide for the development of the intervention plan.

Professional ethics require that all evaluators be familiar with relevant instruments and procedures and select only those they are trained to administer and interpret with confidence. However, not all measures produce quantifiable data or meet psychometric standards for reliability and validity. Thus, evaluators must be aware of the advantages and limitations of various procedures and report their findings accordingly. No single measure or procedure should be considered definitive in providing evidence of ED. Instead, determination of ED must be based on an integration of findings from a multidimensional approach to assessment. Quality standards would include a behavioral approach to the assessment process that has a lower level of inference on the data collected, more emphasis on intraindividual comparisons, and more reliance on direct methods of data collection.

Assessment of ED must consist of multiple sources of data and requires that ED behaviors be displayed in at least two different settings, one of which must be school-related. Quality standards would suggest a model of assessment based on a minimum of five components: 1) interviews with parent, teacher, and student; 2) standardized rating scales administered to the parent and teacher; 3) standardized self-report measures administered to the student (if the child is old enough) or reported as not done if the child is too young; 4) observations of the student in multiple settings; and 5) review of child's relevant background and history (developmental, medical, social, behavioral, educational, etc.). Table 1 presents the types of information obtained from the three key sources of data: the child, the teacher, and the parent.

In some instances, projective assessment can provide additional information on broader aspects of social and emotional functioning. While scoring procedures exist for many projective measures, the interpretation of their results still relies heavily on

clinical judgment. Moreover, normative data, reliability, and validity are limited for certain types of procedures. Projective assessment, therefore, should be conducted only by qualified personnel who have specialized training in this methodology. Even then, results should be interpreted with caution. Because different evaluators often disagree in their interpretation of projective measures, such procedures should not be used as primary data sources for the assessment of ED.

The ED report should explain the characteristics the student displays in social/interpersonal, emotional/affective, behavioral, coping, and self-control areas. It is not sufficient to merely state that a child has an "emotional disturbance". There should be a thorough explanation of how the child's characteristics in these areas impact and interact with the child's performance in the classroom and the school environment. The report should provide clear and specific descriptions of the child's emotional or behavioral problems, as reported in all data sources, and an explanation of how the child was determined to have or not have one of the five ED characteristics. If one or more of the five ED characteristics are identified, the salient features being manifested for the characteristic(s) should be reported and described. Just as it is important to explain why a child meets eligibility criteria as ED, it is equally important to explain why the student does not meet eligibility criteria for any of the five ED characteristics. Possible reasons for not meeting criteria could include a child not having any of the five characteristics to a marked degree, there not being any adverse impact on educational performance, or a child not manifesting a characteristic. An example of the latter would be a child who, although having difficulty in interpersonal relationships, has established friendships commensurate with his or her developmental level. Thus, the characteristic of "inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationship..." has not been met. In general, the evaluator should have a thorough explanation of why the child is ED or why the child is not. "Disturbance" is a vague term and many differing opinions can exist. It is important to ensure that decisions of eligibility are sound and defensible.

Educational need should be addressed directly in any emotional/behavioral or psychological report. There should be statements in the report to show how the child's ED condition adversely impacts his or her educational performance. There should also be direct evidence of the need for special education and how special education services are needed to facilitate the student's success. (Please refer to the previous discussion on educational need with an ED assessment.)

An important purpose of ED assessment is the identification of goals and related interventions. This is often thought of as the "Recommendations" section and should include suggestions for behavioral intervention, placement considerations, and related services. Recommendations should address positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports, such as listing target behaviors to be decreased and replacement behaviors to be

**TABLE 1**  
**Components of Multidimensional Assessment of ED\***

<u>Parent Reports</u>	<u>Teacher Reports</u>	<u>Direct Assessment of the Child</u>
Standardized Behavioral Rating Scales  Questionnaires/Forms  Parent Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of presenting problems</li> <li>• History related to problems</li> <li>• Other possible problem areas</li> <li>• Family factors and stresses</li> <li>• Feasibility of interventions</li> </ul>	Standardized Behavioral Rating Scales  Questionnaires/Forms  School Records  Teacher Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of presenting problems</li> <li>• History related to problems</li> <li>• Feasibility of interventions</li> <li>• Initial goals and intervention plans</li> </ul>	Standardized Self-Reports  Direct Observations  Personality Assessment  Child Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child’s view of problem</li> <li>• Observed behavior and coping skills</li> <li>• Workability for interventions</li> </ul>

*\*McConaughy, S. & Ritter, D. (1995). Multidimensional assessment of emotional or behavioral disorders. In Thomas, A. & Grimes, J. (Eds.), Best Practices In School Psychology III (pp.865-878). Silver Springs, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.*

increased, identifying antecedents and setting events, and describing appropriate interventions. Recommendations should also address placement considerations for the child based on his or her ED characteristics, such as class size, amount of structure or supervision, or specific instructional needs. A third set of recommendations should address related service needs, such as are any counseling, psychological consultation, or other related service needed and why.

Quality standards would suggest that the emotional/behavioral or psychological report contain specific recommendations that link assessment results to interventions. Functional analysis or behavioral terminology should be used when writing recommendations for positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports. For example, instead of simply stating, “J. is likely to become aggressive in unstructured settings such as the cafeteria and playground”, state (or add), “The setting environmental factors for J.’s pushing other children are the cafeteria and playground, with the immediate antecedent identified as being teased by peers.” Now there is a direct link to intervention and replacement behaviors, because J. can be taught a replacement behavior for pushing when he is teased and provide more supervision during unstructured settings to prevent the inappropriate behavior from happening. Thus, there is a direct link to the Behavior Intervention Plan and/or the Behavioral IEP. Not every goal, objective, or target behavior has to be identified in a report, but the most obvious regarding the need for change or intervention should be cited.

The assessment of ED is a very time consuming and complex process. However, it must not be forgotten that it is the ARD Committee that determines eligibility. The psychological or emotional/behavioral report is presented to document evidence of a condition and educational need, and to assist with determining

interventions (including educational and behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports or related service needs).

**Issues**

**Evaluators**

**Quality Standards**

The Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) should conduct all school based assessments of ED because of their special expertise in emotional and behavioral problems. The team of qualified professionals could also include:

- teachers
- educational diagnosticians
- speech/language pathologists
- other professionals who could assess specific areas of concern

**Legal Requirements**

34CFR §300.534(a)(1) A team of qualified professionals and the parent of the child must determine whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in Sec. 300.7.

34CFR §300.21 defines “qualified” as, “a person has met SEA-approved or –recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements tat apply to the area in which he or she is providing special education or related services.”

22TAC §465.38(1)(B) A licensed specialist in school psychology means a person who is trained to address psychological and behavioral problems manifested in and associated with educational systems by utilizing psychological concepts and methods in

programs or actions which attempt to improve the learning, adjustment, and behavior of students including the assessment of emotional or behavioral disturbance, for educational purposes, using psychological techniques and procedures.

22TAC §465.36(c)(1)(D)(I-iii) Ethical standards dictate that an evaluator use instruments and procedures that they are trained and certified to administer and interpret.

### Issues

#### **Assessment Process**

##### Quality Standards

In the assessment of ED, the evaluator selects instruments and techniques that meet the psychometric standards for reliability and validity. Because there is no single measure or procedure that can diagnose an emotional disturbance, a multidimensional approach to assessment should be utilized. A multidimensional approach integrates information from multiple informants and data sources. Best practice for assessing ED dictates at minimum a combination of the following: standardized behavior rating scales; standardized self-reports; interviews with parents, teachers, and the child; direct observation of the child in multiple settings; reviews of relevant background information.

Personality or projective assessment may provide additional information, but interpretation of results rely heavily on judgment, and normative data, reliability and validity are limited for certain types of procedures.

(see Table 1: Components of Multidimensional Assessment of ED)

### Legal Requirements

34CFR §300.532 establishes the legal requirements for the evaluation process. See chapter on Comprehensive Individual Assessment in this manual for a complete description

### Issues

#### **Written Report**

##### Quality Standards

The ED eligibility report should include the following information:

specific information that addresses the characteristics and qualifying conditions of the IDEA definition of ED ;

clear and specific descriptions of the child's emotional/behavioral problems;

duration of identified problems and severity of problems compared to norms for peers of the same age and sex;

specific recommendations that link assessment results to intervention

(see Appendix A: Sample Format for ED Eligibility Report)

### Legal Requirements

The Commissioner's Rules specifies that a report for ED must include:

specific recommendations for behavior supports and interventions (TAC §89.1040[h]);

determination that the student meets the criteria as defined in 34CFR §300.7(b)(4).

### **Related Issues**

#### DSM diagnoses vs. ED

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders - IV (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association, is one of the most widely used systems for classifying adult and childhood psychopathology. Though a DSM-IV diagnosis may be useful for communicating with mental health professionals outside the schools, it is not required nor recommended by federal law for determining an emotional disturbance for special education eligibility. A DSM diagnosis cannot be used in lieu of the five conditions or interchangeably with any of the five conditions.

### **Resources/References**

Breen, M.J., & Fiedler, C.R. (1996). *Behavioral Approach to Assessment of Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: A Handbook for School-Based Practitioners*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

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Zirkel, P.A. (1993). A legal checklist for determining "ED" eligibility. *Communique*, 21 (8), insert.

## Appendix A: \*Sample Format for ED Eligibility Report

### PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION: Emotional Disturbance

#### Reason for Referral

#### Procedures/Tests Used

List all procedures and instruments used: tests, observations, interviews, review of records, etc.

#### Background Information/History

Developmental, educational, medical, social, and family history; review prior evaluations; previous interventions or treatments attempted; review most current psychoeducational data.

#### Behaviors Exhibited

Current behaviors reported by teacher and parent; strengths and weaknesses as perceived by teacher and parent; current discipline record; direct observations of student in educational environment preferably in two settings; rating scales/school checklists completed in referral process.

#### Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Characteristics

Report of standardized rating scales completed by parent and teacher, standardized self-report measures, and projective techniques; describe social, affective, behavioral, self-concept, and coping characteristics.

#### Type of Emotional Disturbance

Identify one or more of the five ED characteristics and explain how this represents an emotional condition by describing the manifestations of the condition. When deciding on whether or not the child manifests a characteristic, consider how long the behaviors have been present, to what degree the characteristics adversely affect educational performance, and how atypical or deviant the child's characteristics are compared to average peers of the same age; DSM IV diagnosis is optional but can not replace the five ED characteristics.

#### Strengths and Weaknesses

List the child's behavioral strengths or behaviors which are appropriate; list behaviors in need of intervention - these will likely become some of the objectives on the behavioral IEP and/or behavior intervention plan.

#### Recommendations for Positive Behavioral Interventions, Strategies, and Supports

List types of proactive services that will be needed - social skills, aggression replacement; what type of classroom setting and instructional strategies will be needed; type of plan of rewards and consequences that will be needed; identify and prioritize behaviors in need of intervention and then identify replacement behaviors which are incompatible with those targeted for reduction or elimination; identify the conditions under which appropriate behavior occurs.

*\*Adapted from formats developed by Ginger Gates, Region IV Education Service Center (Houston) and Gail Cheramie, University of Houston-Clear Lake.*

## Area Reports

### Area III Report

Nancy A. Breunig, Ph.D., LSSP

Well, the summer flew right by and now we're back and being confronted with some of the typical types of issues with a few additional ones. We are still awaiting the Reauthorization of IDEA and wondering how this will impact the services that LSSPs provide. Although we once believed that the discrepancy model might cease to exist in our state, most people are indicating that they don't think this is going to happen. It may be that we are just going to incorporate the use of evidence-based practices in our pre-referral procedures. What is clear is that the use of early interventions, which are based on rigorous research, will be mandated. I have gotten calls from various areas in Texas requesting training for their administrators, Educational Diagnosticians and LSSPs on implementation of No Child Left Behind which will have to align with IDEA. One response to this call is Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). It appears that several LSSP programs are now training their students on the use of CBM or at a minimum they have had exposure to it. I would be interested in hearing from other LSSPs in our area on whether their district is using CBM. If there are districts are using CBM, what has been their role in the implementation. Please feel free to send your comments to me at [nancy.breunig@humble.k12.tx.us](mailto:nancy.breunig@humble.k12.tx.us) In addition, don't forget about the TASP conference this fall. I'll look forward to seeing you all there!

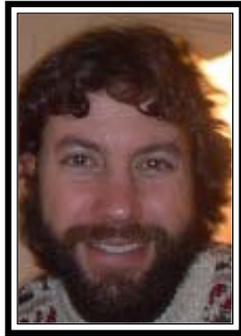


My advice to new LSSPs is the same advice I'd give to anyone embarking on a new career: be flexible and open-minded. Since LSSPs are able to perform myriad roles in the schools, job responsibilities tend to vary according to employer. I would advise all new LSSPs to be willing to take on a variety of roles and wear as many hats as are offered. Being an effective provider of school psychological services is important, but learning how you can impact and improve the overall educational setting using psychological services and your personal strengths and gifts is much more profound. Fortunately, we all have special talents, and I encourage you to discover yours and broaden your horizons.

## Area IV Report

*Jon Lasser, Ph.D., LSSP*

By the time this issue of the Texas School Psychologist reaches your desk, you will undoubtedly have settled into the new school year. I hope that the summer has given you an opportunity to relax, recharge, and rejuvenate. I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting in November and catching up with you.



The Association of School Psychology Students at Texas State University-San Marcos are currently planning some professional development opportunities for the coming year. Members of Area IV will be invited to attend workshops presented by area LSSPs, so check your e-mail for invitations to these events over the next few months.

On Thursday, November 11, I will present a day-long workshop on the Stanford-Binet V at Texas State University-San Marcos. Those interested in attending the workshop should contact me at [jl30@txstate.edu](mailto:jl30@txstate.edu).

As a trainer of school psychologists, I'm often curious about the job market in our area, as many of our students are seeking internships following the completion of their coursework. Much has been written about the apparent shortage of LSSPs, but I know of no data that support this finding in our area. Feel free to share your district/coop's status with me, as I'm very interested in our current situation.

## Area V Report

*Mae F. Fjelsted, NCSP, LSSP*

Summer is rapidly coming to a close for staff and students. I hope all of you have had time to relax and get some rest. The new school year will continue with recommendations from the U. S. Department of Education on how SDAA and LDAA will count toward AYP. In addition, who fits into the profile of "significantly cognitively disabled?" To keep up with these issues and recommended changes check the TEA and/or NASP website. We are also waiting to see if IDEA will make it through the Joint Conference Committee so it can be reauthorized before the end of this year. If not,



then it is back to the drawing board when the new Congressional year begins. I hope that the House and Senate will do what they need to do so we can better meet the needs of all our children.

The question was posed: "What advice would you give to a new LSSP?" My advise to any LSSP is to get involved with professional organizations at the State and National levels. With all of the changes taking place in education and special education, we need to be well informed so we can ensure that the children are getting a quality education that prepares them for the workforce in a changing world. We also need to keep up with any changes in the Law and how that affects our service to children. Continuing education is a requirement and it must be meaningful to help us improve our skills so we are able to make appropriate recommendations for interventions. The job of an LSSP needs to be more than just an evaluator who assesses for a disability. A label does not give us a "cure," but gives us directions on what types of strategies the child needs in the classroom to learn. We need to become familiar with research based academic and behavioral interventions. The best advice I could give to a new LSSP is to look forward to an exciting time, be prepared for many changes, and keep smiling! There will be days when you wonder why you chose this field and when you feel most discouraged, a student or parent will come up to you and thank you for help them or their child. That is the greatest thing I enjoy is hearing from my former students who are now out making their way successfully in the world.

## Area VI Report

*Mindi Jeter, LSSP*

My advice to new LSSPs is the same advice I'd give to anyone embarking on a new career: be flexible and open-minded. Since LSSPs are able to perform myriad roles in the schools, job responsibilities tend to vary according to employer. I would advise all new LSSPs to be willing to take on a variety of roles and wear as many hats as are offered.

Being an effective provider of school psychological services is important, but learning how you can impact and improve the overall educational setting using psychological services and your personal strengths and gifts is much more profound. Fortunately, we all have special talents, and I encourage you to discover yours and broaden your horizons.



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