



The Texas School Psychologist

*A partner on the path to student success*

Texas Association of School Psychologists

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Winter 2019

## President's Message

*Art Hernandez, President*

### TASP Elected Executive Board:

#### **Area I Representative**

Jenna Becker

#### **Area II Representative**

Cammaron Trujillo

#### **Area III Representative**

David Kahn

#### **Area IV Representative**

Cassandra Hulsey

#### **Area V Representative**

Jessica Greve

#### **Area VI Representative**

Christy Chapman

#### **Graduate Student Representative**

Kassi Gregory

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#### **President**

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Stephanie Barbre

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Kristin Streich

### TASP Appointed Executive Board:

#### **Awards & Honors Chair**

Stephanie Barbre

#### **Convention Chair**

Jenna Becker

#### **Government & Professional Relations**

Cassandra Hulsey

#### **Historian**

Ashley Arnold

#### **TASP Journal Task Force**

Jeremy Sullivan

#### **Membership Chair**

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#### **NASP State Delegate**

Laurie Klose

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Daniel McCleary

#### **Professional Development**

Ashley Arnold

#### **Public Information & Relations**

Daniel McCleary

#### **School Psychology Trainers**

Sarah Mire

#### **Webmaster**

Brook Roberts

This year has simply flown by; I cannot believe that my tenure as President is almost over. Your Board has worked very hard this year to represent your interests in the legislature, advance your concerns with the TSBEP and disseminate NASP and other evidence-based best practice suggestions and resources. We have committed to improving internal processes in order to ensure that we are responsible custodians of the resources and trust that you place in us. For example, we have worked diligently on the budget for next year ensuring that we do not spend more than we bring in and are working to develop a strategic reserve in the event of a catastrophic event, which could mean a year without income. We have reviewed our legislative priorities and taken stock of what we have accomplished and about what we will continue to advocate for the future. We have been busy working on developing the infrastructure so that in the future as needs may dictate, TASP will be positioned to assist school districts across the state in response to crisis whether it be a natural disaster or a school shooting. TASP

is strongly involved in efforts to address the shortage of practitioners in the State and Nation compiling information, generating reports and reaching out to the media and policy makers offering solutions as well as highlighting the problem.

I cannot take any credit for what we have done this year; it is the reasonable extension of the work of my predecessors and the individual efforts of members of the Board. Though it is always a risk to identify anyone by name, I would feel remiss if I did not mention just a few. Dr. Thomas Schanding, Past President has lent his guidance and vision to the work of the Board for several years in a significant way. As President, he was responsible for the reorganization of Board work and for the strategic vision he brought to TASP. His will be an influence on organizational management for some time to come. Dr. Stephanie Barbre, former Treasurer and President Elect, who was primarily responsible for Conference planning and whose work resulted in the outstanding slate of presenters and consequent professional development opportunity for all of us. In addition, Stephanie was and will remain the principal in the

Board's efforts to address the shortage in Texas. Thanks to her efforts, we have documented and communicated the challenge and advocated for efforts to resolve that challenge. Ms. Cassandra Hulseley Area Rep and the TASP legislative liaison has worked tirelessly as the principal advocate for the TASP legislative agenda. Cassandra has performed this effort on behalf of the Board for the past several years and we owe much of our recent success in the legislature and TSBE to her advocacy work. Dr. Laurie Klose, a Past President who served as our NASP delegate has been a strong presence in the State and has contributed to the success of TASP for years as well as represented us well at the National level. Laurie has been selfless in her efforts to ensure the goals of TASP and the needs of School Psychology are addressed at all levels and in all ways from training to practice to advocacy. Her work has been and continues to be inspirational to me personally and I hope I can be as supportive and hard working as she has always been. Brook Roberts, another Past President who is the TASP Webmaster whose work has resulted in an effective, vital and current virtual presence and platform not only for communication but also for conducting organizational business. Jeremy Sullivan, a former Area Rep who is the Journal Editor. He undertook the development of the Journal from the beginning and is principally responsible for the nature and quality of our organization's professional publication. He is one of those "under the radar" kind of people, he seems to actively avoid any attention, but he is also responsible and hard working and he always seems to get results. Finally, I would like to thank the rest of the members of the Board for their efforts. While I am not identifying them by name, I want to thank them sincerely as well for their sacrifices, their effort and their honesty in advancing the best interests of the organization. Their individual contributions were important to our collective success this year.

As I look forward to the end of my tenure, I am content and confident knowing that our professional organization is in good and responsible hands. I fully and completely believe that TASP is and will remain an effective and responsible advocate for your interests and that you will be well served by your membership and your involvement. We have accomplished much over the years but, the job is never ending. Thank you for your partnership; please consider encouraging your colleagues to join and get involved. I have discovered the truth of the adage that there is strength in numbers but after this year, I have also realized that the actions of each individual person makes a difference. We need you and all our colleagues to join and be a part of the solution.



Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your work. It is your commitment to children in schools and their families that contributes to effective education *for all* children. Your support and advancement of social-emotional learning, mental health, healthy development, and maximizing opportunity truly impacts the trajectory of children's lives touching each one individually and affecting all of them and the society in which we will live. You make a difference! I am proud to be associated with you and happy to know so many of you. Have a great break and a fantastic finish to the year.

*Art Hernandez*  
TASP President, 2019

# Government & Professional Relations Update

Thank you to everyone who participated in SPAW Advocacy Action Day with TASP and NASP! Texas was one of 36 states to participate in the campaign to ask state and federal lawmakers to support creating safe and supportive learning environments, increasing access to school-employed mental health professionals, and ensuring comprehensive and rigorous school curricula.

While the 86th legislative session has ended and we have reviewed several school psychology relevant bills, here is another important bill that your special education departments should be aware of:



**Senate Bill 500:** Provides an additional \$50 million of state special education funding for reimbursing school districts for the following special education expenses: additional funding for eligible LEAs to secure evaluation staff, related services personnel, and/or special education teachers to fill short-term needs in the areas of initial evaluations, compensatory services and ESY services. Region 20 ESC will be administering this grant. A webinar was held on December 5, 2019 to share application details. The link to the Special Education Fiscal Supports (SB500) Informational Webinar is <https://esc-20.zoom.us/j/778447691>. There

will be two opportunities to apply for reimbursement funding: February 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020.

The 87th legislative session will begin gearing up next fall; however, lawmakers are working during the interim on several topics, including some regarding education. Education Committee interim session charges of note include:

**Alternative Education Students:** Study current local, state, and national policies and programs for alternative education student populations. Make recommendations to strengthen existing programs and encourage the development of new innovative models.

**Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs:** Review disciplinary alternative education programs, including lengths of placement, quality of instruction, and the physical conditions of these facilities. Make recommendations to support and promote the academic success of these programs and enhance the ability of public schools to meet the needs of these students through innovative school models.

**Special Education Services:** Evaluate ongoing strategies to continuously improve special education services for students in public schools including, but not limited, to the Texas Education Agency's corrective action plan.

**Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Education passed by the 86th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:

**Senate Bill 11,** relating to policies, procedures, and measures for school safety and

mental health promotion in public schools and the creation of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium

**House Bill 3**, relating to public school finance and public education

TASP will continue to serve as a resource to lawmakers on best practices regarding these topics to continue our visibility and presence at the capitol. If your lawmakers are spending some time at home during the interim, be friendly and pay them a visit—it is always a good time to advocate for school psychology!

*Cassandra Hulse*

Government & Professional Relations

## DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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# Graduate Student Corner

Hello TASP Grad Students,

Congratulations to Kamara Barnett, Anabel Meyer, Emily Wingate, and Jennifer Baker, the 2019 TASP scholarship winners! All four recipients were awarded a \$500 TASP scholarship to assist in their graduate studies.

I was so glad to see familiar and new faces this year at Convention. Thank you again to Leslie Paige, NASP President, for the graduate student session discussing advocacy and furthering our profession. It was such an excellent opportunity for us to have a conversation with a strong advocate for school psychology. I look forward to seeing each of the TASP graduate students grow in our profession and into leadership roles.

It has been an honor to serve as the Graduate Student Representative. Best of luck as you write those last minute edits and cram in a few more reports before the break.

*Kassi Gregory*

Graduate Student Representative

# Treasurer's Report

More than just convention.

In October, more than 560 school psychologists, graduate students, and affiliates joined together in our amazing fall convention to network, job search, learn from the newest research, and get our ethics and multicultural CEUs. Convention is amazing. For 3 days we were surrounded by people who do not respond to our job title with “really? I do not think my school has one of those.” We built lasting networks and friendships, and refocused our research interests. But convention is more than just CEUs.

This year, for the first time, TASP organized a job fair at convention, to help school districts match up with qualified professionals. In fact, TASP maintains job postings on our website as a service to Texas districts.

This year at convention, TASP allocated \$85,000 to make sure the convention lives up to the high standards you all set. We look forward to convention all year long and we love to attend, but TASP is more than just convention.

This summer, TASP was the only organization in the country offering a Trainer of Trainers certification in the NASP PREPaRE curriculum at our annual Summer Institute.

TASP is more than just convention.

So far this year, TASP has spent more than \$18,000 and countless volunteer hours from our board and membership to advocate for the needs of our profession and our students to the Texas State Legislature.

More than just convention.

This year for the first time, TASP has funded and begun the organization of a new School Safety Committee to begin the proactive work and trainings that districts require from the experts and professionals that they already employ but often overlook.

More than just convention.

This year TASP members have increased donations to our CALC charity to maintain our focus on the needs of others.

More than just convention.

This year TASP again awarded 4 graduate student scholarships to honor the hard work and professionalism of our continually growing profession.



More than just convention.

As TASP continues to grow and extend our sphere of influence, our opinions are increasingly solicited, our positions are increasingly respected, and our membership is increasingly recognized.

TASP is more than just convention.

Without all of you, TASP is nothing. Your membership matters. Your activism matters. Your professionalism mat-

ters. Thank you for your support. Thank you for attending our events, for purchasing our swag, for advocating to your legislators, for running for TASP office, for supporting your schools, teachers, parents, and students. TASP has grown in size and influence over the years, but we have a lot left to accomplish and we continue to need your support. We have all chosen a difficult profession. We are often overlooked in our schools, we are assigned some of the most difficult students and our successes are often unrecognized beyond the gratitude of an administrator who now is thankful you can move on to working with the next most difficult issue. Despite it all, you matter and you make a difference.

Thank you for being here for TASP, so TASP can be here for you.

*Curt Johnson*

Treasurer



*The rising STAR of Texas*

**Texas State University offers a Specialist in School Psychology (SSP) degree in school psychology, approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and accredited by the International School Psychology Association (ISPA).**

The Texas State School Psychology program is one of the oldest school psychology programs in the state of Texas and endorses the scientist-practitioner training model. Texas State offers advanced training opportunities in the recognition and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders as well as advanced training opportunities in bilingual school psychology. The deadline for applying to the school psychology program at Texas State University is mid-February. Application information may be found at:

<http://www.txstate.edu/clas/schoolpsychology/Admissions-Information.html>

**For more information, please contact:** Paul B. Jantz, Ph.D.

[Pj16@txstate.edu](mailto:Pj16@txstate.edu)

Coordinator, School Psychology Program



Texas A&M University – Central Texas School Psychology program is accepting applications for their Specialist Degree in School Psychology (SSP) program. Interested applicants should hold a Bachelors degree in Psychology or a closely related field and be dedicated to improving the lives of students and schools. The SSP program is 63 graduate hours and prepares students to become a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology in the state of Texas, or seek licensure as a School Psychologist in other states. The program includes extensive training in assessment, counseling, consultation and internship experiences that help apply classroom learning to real life problems. Send letters of inquiry to: Dr. Co-ady Lapierre, LSSP, 1001 Leadership Place, Killeen, Texas 76549 or [lapierre@tamuct.edu](mailto:lapierre@tamuct.edu)

# Spotlight on an LSSP: Darcy McLain

By Christy Chapman

Our Spotlight on an LSSP focuses on Darcy McLain, an LSSP currently working for Canyon Independent School District in Area VI. This will be the start of her 9th year as an LSSP. Darcy received her Specialist in School Psychology degree from West Texas A&M University. Most of her time at work is spent doing assessments and serving as a case manager for campuses.

Darcy was given the opportunity by her district to create and develop a behavioral website to assist teachers when dealing with behaviors in the classroom. Her motto is to meet the masses without being with the masses. The goal of the website is to give teachers resources at the click of a button. The website is a combination of interventions gathered throughout the years, printables, and videos created by the LSSPs of the district.

Darcy has used several different modes of media such as Snapchat, TikTok, PowerPoint, and Screencasts to make the videos. The videos range from “how-to” videos such as, “How to create your own mystery motivator” to videos that teach staff how to implement reinforcement charts in the classroom using none other than the district LSSPs as actors (or whoever Darcy is able to bribe to be in the videos when it is time for the camera to roll!). Darcy’s vision is that the videos be short, funny or engaging, and most importantly helpful. She noted that she is very blessed to be in a district that is supportive of developing new ways to help students become successful. Way to go Darcy!



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**For more information:** [baylor.edu/SOE/edp/schoolpsychology](http://baylor.edu/SOE/edp/schoolpsychology)  
**Dr. Alex Beaujean, program director:** [Alex\\_Beaujean@baylor.edu](mailto:Alex_Beaujean@baylor.edu)

# How to Support a Grieving Child Returning to School



The children have returned to school. For some, it is the first time back in the school setting since the death of their loved one. For almost all, there will be new teachers, classmates, classrooms, and school schedules. Change often brings anxiety, especially for those children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling. They may be wondering how they will handle the questions about their deceased parent or their sibling, or whether or not they even want their teachers and friends to know about the death.

To help bereaved children, ask them what they are happily anticipating or fearfully dreading about the new school year. By talking about their concerns, you may find ways to help them transition back into the school routine. Also, help the children create a plan with their teachers so that they may feel supported at school. Here are some things parents at Bo's Place have discussed with their children's teachers:

- If your child would like to tell the class about the death, ask the teacher to help tell the class, or make suggestions for what your child's teacher could say.
- Make a "Safety Plan" ahead of time designating what your child can do if and when he or she gets upset during the school day. Some examples of Safety Plans are:
  - Going to the library, nurse's office, or to the principal or counselor.
  - Staying in the classroom, but doing something different like writing in a journal.
  - Going to the office to call someone at home or at work.
- Encourage your child to ask for help if he or she has problems keeping up with his or her work.
- Ask your child's teacher, if needed, to cut back on homework for a while.
- Ask if your child can sit by a supportive friend.
- Can you think of other things you can talk to the teacher about? Ask your group members what has been helpful for their children in the school setting.



Bo's Place

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Texas A&M University – Central Texas School Psychology program is accepting applications for their Specialist Degree in School Psychology (SSP) program. Interested applicants should hold a Bachelors degree in Psychology or a closely related field and be dedicated to improving the lives of students and schools. The SSP program is 63 graduate hours and prepares students to become a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology in the state of Texas, or seek licensure as a School Psychologist in other states. The program includes extensive training in assessment, counseling, consultation and internship experiences that help apply classroom learning to real life problems. Send letters of inquiry to: Dr. Co-ady Lapierre, LSSP, 1001 Leadership Place, Killeen, Texas 76549 or lapierre@tamuct.edu



## Area III Update

TASP leadership has been busy advocating for our profession and the work we do to help the students and families in our districts. The shortage of LSSPs was recently discussed on Houston Public Media. President-Elect of TASP Stephanie Barbre and Jennifer Byrne, Assistant Director for Special Education for Fort Bend ISD, were recently interviewed about the statewide demand for LSSPs. To read the full story, go to <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/in-depth/2019/11/19/351367/demand-for-special-education-grows-in-texas-but-shortage-of-school-psychologists-slows-progress/>.

It was good to see many of you at TASP's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. Each annual convention gets better, and this year's convention was no exception. If you have not already done so, mark your calendars for the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, which will be on October 8-10, 2020. Next year we will be in San Antonio at the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade.

Thank you for being loyal members of TASP. Without you, TASP would not be able to advocate for the profession. The leadership of TASP continues to need the support of all LSSPs during this crucial time. Continue to encourage your colleagues who are not currently TASP members to consider joining. We are only as strong as our membership, so let us work together to ensure that every LSSP in Area III is a member of TASP.

Finally, thanks to all of you who donated to the Children's Assistance for Living Committee (CALC) Support Project. This year's recipient was Bo's Place, a non-profit, free-of-charge bereavement center that offers multiple grief support services for children and families. Bo's Place produced a handout with recommendations for how to support a grieving child when it is time for them to return to school. Feel free to share this handout with your colleagues and any caregivers who might benefit from it.

*David Kahn*



University of Texas at San Antonio

### School Psychology Program

The Department of Educational Psychology at UTSA is pleased to offer the Master of Arts program in School Psychology. The program includes coursework and field-based experiences consistent with guidelines provided by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists and the National Association of School Psychologists. Most courses are offered in the evening at the UTSA Downtown Campus, and full-time and part-time tracks are available. Application deadlines are as follows: July 1st for the Fall, November 1st for the Spring, and April 1st for the Summer. Students are currently completing their practicum experiences with the following sites: Alamo Heights ISD, Atascosa-McMullen Cooperative, Bexar County Academy, Boerne ISD, George Gervin Academy, San Antonio ISD, San Antonio Special Programs Cooperative, Somerset ISD, and South San ISD. Students are currently completing their internship experiences with the following sites: AIM Consulting, Alamo Heights ISD, Atascosa-McMullen Cooperative, Autism Treatment Center, Belton ISD, Boerne ISD, East Central ISD, George Gervin Academy, Granbury ISD, Heartland Special Education Cooperative, Katy ISD, and San Antonio ISD.

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

## Area V Update

Greetings Area V! It was wonderful seeing so many Area V people at TASP this year. We saw a lot of networking in between sessions and even more networking at TASP's first job fair. Several Area V school districts set up booths and were able to share information about their districts with many LSSPs. There was a great turnout and the fair served as a reminder of the effectiveness of visibility. Having more opportunities for LSSPs to hear and share about districts' effective practices with each other across the state can help us all improve the level of services we provide.



Do you want to share a success story or an effective practice from your district? We would love to hear about it and post it in our newsletter or on our Facebook page. Let us continue sharing successes with one another!

Finally, I would like to congratulate Judson Independent School District and Jennifer Baker, both TASP award winners from our very own Area V! Thank you for the wonderful things you do to serve our youth and for representing our area so admirably.

*Jessica Greve*



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# TASP 2019 Awards and Honors

The annual TASP Awards Ceremony was held on October 23, 2019 at the Fall Convention. It is an honor to recognize the outstanding work of our peers contributing to the profession. Congratulations to the 2019 award recipients- TASP appreciates their dedicated service delivery in school psychology. The recipients and their contributions are highlighted below:



## **Outstanding School Psychologist- Doctoral Level**

Dr. Pastorek is an LSSP and licensed psychologist employed by Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. In 2018, she was selected among other mental health professionals to create a district level Mental Health Intervention Team, which is designed to identify at-risk youth for harm to self and others and provide research-based, best practice intervention. Dr. Pastorek has also trained and collaborated with district personnel on the district model of crisis response and has presented the model at the state and national levels.

## **Outstanding School Psychologist- Specialist Level**

Jennifer Baker is an LSSP currently employed as a Behavior Specialist at East Central I.S.D. in San Antonio and is also currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Texas Tech University. She recently implemented a special project designed to empower students with behavior difficulties by teaching social skills and emotional regulation. She was also recognized at the APA 2018 Division 16 Convention with the distinction Best Overall Top Student Poster Presentation focused on investigating the quality of FBAs and BIPs using the TATE method.



## **Outstanding Delivery of School Psychological Services- District Award**

Judson I.S.D. has made great strides in prioritizing psychological services as well as advocating for their LSSPs and fair compensation. The administrative commitment to continue to improve services is supported by their willingness to ease the workload of LSSPs so that their students can receive quality services. In addition to providing services in the form of assessment, consultation, and related services counseling, each campus has implemented behavior pro-



grams. The district is also home to the Judson Care Academy, which is a therapeutic program designed for students with severe mental health issues and behavioral needs. In addition, the district provides special transition services for adjudicated teens who have returned from detention centers back to home and school.

### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

Dr. Gates is one of the founding members and a past president of TASP. She has dedicated a lifetime of 37 years of service to education and has worked tirelessly to ensure access to school psychological services for students in Texas public schools. Dr. Gates is known for her leadership of the Texas Behavioral Support Initiative (TBSI) and through her work on this project, she became the leading expert in our state and also was credited with developing the state's Discipline Flow Chart for Students with Disabilities. More recently, her role as Director of Special Education Solutions at the Region 4 ESC contributed in earning the lead role for the Child Find, Evaluation, and ARD Supports



Network, which was just awarded to Region 4 this past June. In addition, Dr. Gates' department has been instrumental in coordinating supports and services after Hurricane Harvey and the shooting at Santa Fe High School. Through her leadership and coordination of state, regional, and local resources, Dr. Gates and her staff worked endlessly to ensuring that these districts' needs were being met following these traumatic events.



### **Outstanding Poster Presentation**

Dr. Tamara Hodges, Felicity Frost, and Allyson Yturradle from Baylor University were awarded the 2019 Best Poster Presentation award for their research on Promoting Post-Secondary Education for At-Risk Students.



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# Spotlight on a Training Program: Sam Houston State University

By Courtney Banks, Ph.D.

The Sam Houston State University Specialist in School Psychology (SSP) program is located in Huntsville, Texas, approximately 1 hour from Houston. This 60-hour graduate degree program is aligned with guidelines of the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Psychological Association, and the rules of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. The SSP program focuses on building and applying competencies in the areas of assessment, intervention, and consultation at the individual and school system level, all within the lens of research based practices. Five core faculty members comprise the program, each with active research agendas surrounding assessment, consultation, behavior intervention, bullying, and identity development.

Students within the SSP program are interpersonal, productive, collaborative, and achieve as they matriculate through the program and beyond. Graduate students are also active in discipline, community, and department events as members of the Sam Houston Association of School Psychologists (SHASP). On average, the program enrolls seven cohort members each fall semester. Demographically, graduate students are representative of an array of culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds. Students draw from their personal identities to support and value the worldview of each other as well as of students, parents, and school staff. Application of course topics beyond the classroom begin as early as the first year; at this time students visit schools to engage in behavior and academic consultation. Additional topics of study include the following:

- Data-based decision making and Accountability
- Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills
- Socialization and Development of Life Skills
- Student Diversity in Development and Learning
- School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate
- Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health
- Home/School/Community Collaboration
- Research and Program Evaluation
- School Psychology Practice and Development

The last year of the program, typically the third year, is field experience and internship. Over the past 15 years, the program is proud to have graduated 100 students. Many of the graduates of the SSP program remain in the school district and become Licensed Specialists in School Psychology; others have worked within the educational setting as administrators or enrolled in school psychology doctoral programs.

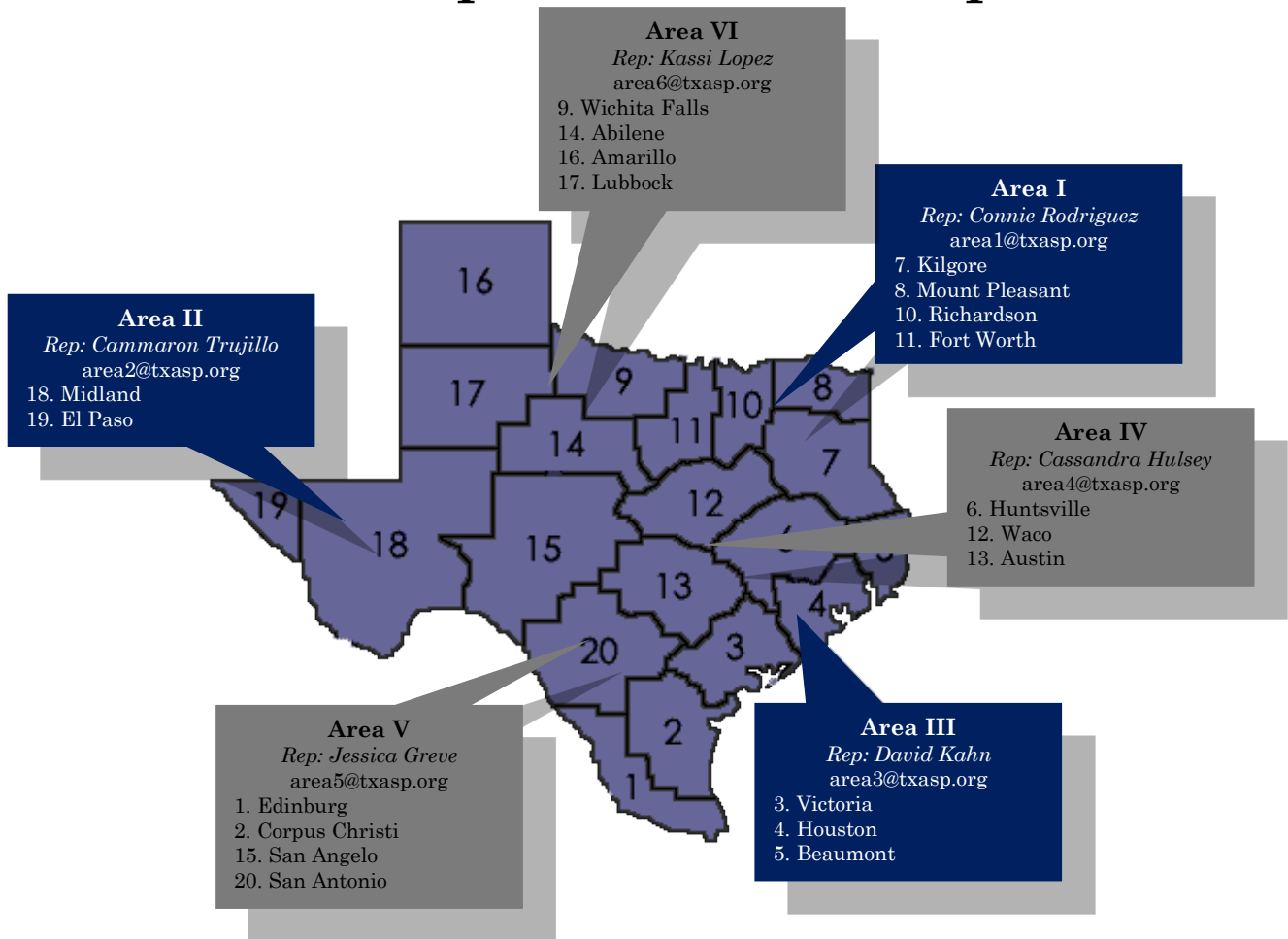
Interested in joining our program? We would love to have you.

For more information, please contact Dr. Ramona Noland at [noland@shsu.edu](mailto:noland@shsu.edu) or 936.294.4310.



# Information from the Area Representatives!

## Area Representative Map



## TASP 2019 Election Results

Elections for the 2020 TASP Executive Board are complete! We are excited to announce the results:

President-Elect: Cassandra Hulsey

Treasurer-Elect: Kassi Gregory

Secretary: Stephanie Mathis

Area II Representative: Anabel Ramos

Area IV Representative: Kathleen Corsi

Area VI Representative: Christy Chapman

Graduate Student Representative: Tanya Perez (UHCL)

# Ethical Eddie

Dear Eddie,

For the first time, our school is working with a transgender student regarding appropriate access to facilities. There are a lot of emotional responses in the community related to meeting the needs of all students with respect to gender. I have been in practice for more than 15 years and my training did not include content or practical experiences regarding working with gender diverse students. In addition, I personally believe that this has become more of a political and philosophical debate rather than an evidence based one. I want to be professional and work with this student and family, but I am not sure what I am doing. What ethical issues should I attend to and am I missing things?

New Territory

Hello New,

This is an important issue that is addressed in some general and some specific ways in our ethical standards. Here are some suggestions of ethical standards to consider moving forward:

*With regard to social justice related to gender diversity:*

Standard I.3.1 School psychologists do not engage in or condone actions or policies that discriminate against persons, including students and their families, other recipients of service, supervisees, and colleagues based on actual or perceived characteristics including race; ethnicity; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; immigration status; socioeconomic status; primary language; gender; sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; mental, physical, or sensory disability; or any other distinguishing characteristics.



*With regard to understanding the impact of gender diversity on school psychological services:*

Standard I.3.2 School psychologists pursue awareness and knowledge of how diversity factors may influence child development, behavior, and school learning. In conducting psychological, educational, or behavioral evaluations or in providing interventions, therapy, counseling, or consultation services, the school psychologist takes into account individual characteristics as enumerated in Standard I.3.1 so as to provide effective services.

Standard II.1.2 Practitioners are obligated to pursue knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds of students, families, and other clients. When knowledge and understanding of diversity characteristics are essential to ensure competent assessment, intervention, or consultation, school psychologists have or obtain the training or supervision necessary to provide effective services, or they make appropriate referrals.

*Regarding the school psychologist's role in advocating for gender diverse students:*

Standard I.3.4 School psychologists strive to ensure that all children have equal opportunity to



participate in and benefit from school programs and that all students and families have access to and can benefit from school psychological services.

*Regarding the practicing only areas of competency:*

Standard II.1.1 School psychologists recognize the strengths and limitations of their training and experience, engaging only in practices for which they are qualified. They enlist the assistance of other specialists in supervisory, consultative, or referral roles as appropriate in providing effective services.

*Regarding understanding one's own belief systems and then impact on service delivery:*

Standard II.1.3 School psychologists refrain from any activity in which their personal problems may interfere with professional effectiveness. They seek assistance when personal problems threaten to compromise their professional effectiveness (also see III.4.2).

*Regarding privacy concerns for gender diverse students:*

Standard I.2.6 School psychologists respect the right of privacy of students, parents, and colleagues with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status. They do not share information about the sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status of a student (including minors), parent, or school employee with anyone without that individual's permission.

When you are working with other professionals in your system, refer to these specific principles. By making sure that these standards are upheld, you are likely to ensure that the policies and procedures developed are in the best interest of this student and family.

Ethically,

Eddie

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## School Psychology Program

The University of Houston-Clear Lake's College of Human Sciences and Humanities offers a Specialist in School Psychology (SSP). Approved by the National Association of School Psychologists, the UHCL School Psychology program seeks to prepare students to become Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSPs) and Nationally Certified School Psychologists (NCSPs).

Students gain knowledge and skills aligning with national standards such as:

- assessment for academic, behavioral, developmental, and social-emotional functioning;
- evidence-based prevention and intervention services for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional functioning;
- crisis prevention/intervention; and
- consultation and collaboration with schools and families.

Students complete courses with outstanding faculty and have hands-on training in the UHCL Psychological Services Clinic, school-based practicum, and the capstone, paid school-based internship.

**Applications should be submitted by January 25<sup>th</sup>.**

<http://www.uhcl.edu/schoolpsychology>

For more information, contact Dr. Thomas Schanding (schandingjr@uhcl.edu).



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

## Journal Update

The first six issues of *Research and Practice in the Schools* can be accessed on the TASP website: <http://www.txasp.org/tasp-journal>. We welcome manuscripts from school psychologists working in a variety of settings. Submissions can include original empirical research, theoretical or conceptual articles, test reviews, book reviews, and software reviews. If you would like to submit a manuscript for publication consideration, please email [jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu) or see the latest issue for the Instructions for Authors.

### Call for Special Issue Proposals:

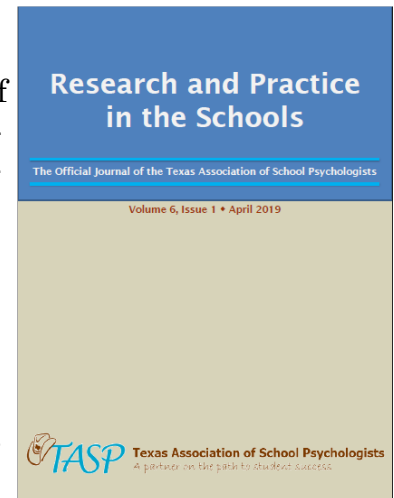
Are you interested in proposing a special issue of the journal? Perhaps an issue on crisis intervention, assessment of emotional disturbance, or training/supervision in school psychology? If so, please let us know about your ideas. Special issues will include collections of papers related to some cohesive theme in the field of School Psychology, and will be edited by Guest Editors who will take the lead in soliciting contributions and coordinating the peer review process. In addition to special issues that focus on research and scholarship in School Psychology, we welcome special issues that cover important practical and applied issues in the field.

Special issue proposals should include a brief description of the theme to be covered by the issue, approximate number of articles to be included, qualifications and expertise of those who will serve as Guest Editors of the issue, and a plan for soliciting manuscripts and conducting the reviews. Proposals for special issues, and questions about the process, should be sent to [jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu).

Our editorial team is currently finalizing the *Special Issue on Trauma-Informed School Psychology Practices*, guest edited by Julia Englund Strait, PhD, Kirby Wycoff, PsyD, and Aaron Gubi, PhD. We are excited to have received so many submissions for our first special issue of the journal, and look forward to publication in the next month or so.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the continuing evolution of *Research and Practice in the Schools*. If you have any questions or feedback about the journal, please email [jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu](mailto:jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu) or [aeherna8@uiwtx.edu](mailto:aeherna8@uiwtx.edu).

*Jeremy Sullivan and Art Hernandez*  
Editors, *Research and Practice in the Schools*



## MASTER OF ARTS IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

At UTRGV our graduate program in school psychology prepares you to work with children, adolescents, and families from diverse socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The UTRGV School Psychology program is in accordance with the scientist-practitioner model of training, which emphasizes school psychologists to use empirical research in practice. The program training includes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and school systems.

*You will also receive preparation for the following credentials:* Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists) and the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (National Association of School Psychologists Certification Board).

*For more information contact Dr. Nancy P. Razo, School Psychology Program Coordinator, at [nancy.razo@utrgv.edu](mailto:nancy.razo@utrgv.edu) or the UTRGV Graduate College at [utrgv.edu/grad](http://utrgv.edu/grad)*

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## School Psychologists' Involvement in Assessment

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) asserts that school psychologists are uniquely suited to promote best practices in assessment<sup>1</sup> and evaluation<sup>2</sup> and to determine, in collaboration with others, when assessment is warranted. School psychologists have completed in-depth and advanced preparation in conducting interviews, completing systematic observations, and selecting and administering tests and other assessment instruments supporting evidence-based<sup>3</sup> and culturally sensitive<sup>4</sup> practices. They are also well prepared to interpret and evaluate information obtained from assessments to guide educationally relevant decisions. Because of their expertise and training in these areas, school psychologists should (a) plan and conduct assessments of individuals, groups, and systems; (b) interpret assessment results; and (c) engage in data-driven decision-making as part of school-based services supporting students.

School psychologists are familiar with the central principles of measurement (Hixson, Christ, & Bruni, 2014; Reynolds & Livingston, 2014), the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014), and print and Web-based sources of test reviews (such as the Buros Institute for Mental Measurements, the National Center on Intensive Intervention, and the National Center on Response to Intervention; see Floyd & Norfolk, 2014), and they adhere to legal and ethical standards of practice (NASP, 2010a, 2010b). They employ a multimethod, multisource, and multisetting approach to assessment that is sensitive to contextual influences. They select and use the most appropriate assessment instruments and techniques, for the purpose for which they were designed, and for which there is supporting evidence. They engage in culturally competent practices to promote fair, reliable, and valid outcomes and modify assessments to address all aspects of diversity that might impact results (Carvalho, Dennison, & Estrella, 2014; Ortiz, 2014). School psychologists are aware of the limitations of assessment information, and they collect, interpret, report, and use assessment information in a manner that minimizes the potential for misunderstanding and misuse. They acknowledge conscious and unconscious biases and employ interpretive and decision-making processes designed to reduce bias and inequitable outcomes (NASP, 2010b). When reporting assessment results, they make relevant limitations explicit, especially as those limitations relate to the reliability and validity of decisions. Throughout their careers, they engage in professional development to ensure they understand the unique needs of the school leaders, teachers, specialists, parents, and students to whom they provide assessment and evaluation services.

### ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

School psychologists have very important roles to play during the provision of assessment and evaluation services in schools and related settings. With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) references

school psychologists, along with other specialized instructional support personnel, as providing assessment and evaluation services as part of a comprehensive program for students with disabilities. Furthermore, the ESSA recommends the involvement of school psychologists to support students at risk of academic and behavior problems, address school climate and safety, and promote the mental and behavioral health of all students. Within a well-designed, multitiered system of supports, school psychologists should provide expertise in assessment that informs educational decisions at the universal, targeted, and intensive levels of support. The NASP Practice Model (2010a) and *NASP Practice Model Implementation Guide* (Skalski et al., 2015) outline an expanded role for school psychologists that emphasizes participation in and evaluation of prevention and early intervention programs to promote the development of all students across academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and cultural domains.

NASP asserts that school psychologists should contribute to assessment and evaluation practices conducted within a multitiered system of supports. Decisions stemming from such practices can be classified as low stakes, moderate stakes, or high stakes. *Low-stakes* decisions are routine, frequent, and reversible, and they include the allocation of services and resources for brief periods of time (e.g., assigning students in small groups to complete a science project). They are often guided by information from informal assessment practices. *Moderate-stakes* decisions are less routine, less frequent, and less reversible than low-stakes decisions and include the allocation of early intervention and prevention services and resources for moderate periods of time (e.g., adding targeted small group support using the reciprocal teaching strategy on top of universal core instruction). *High-stakes* decisions are not routine, frequent, or reversible. They impact large groups and groups with special needs, and they include decisions associated with threat assessments to individuals (e.g., suicide threats) or groups (e.g., youth violence), diagnosis, and special education eligibility. High-stakes decisions must incorporate assessment practices with demonstrated technical adequacy to support the decisions being made.

School psychologists should play a substantial role in data-driven decision-making in each of the following areas (sequenced here from low stakes to high stakes).

- *Routine decisions.* School psychologists sometimes make routine decisions based on information from assessment practices that have unknown or modest technical adequacy. Such information is routinely recorded in grade books, teacher logs and notes, attendance records, office referrals, and notes between home and school. Information from these less formal assessment practices often guides the provision of services to students who are typically functioning and meeting grade level school expectations.
- *Screening, progress monitoring, and problem identification.* School psychologists contribute to the screening of all students to identify those who are not meeting grade-level expectations for academic achievement and mental and behavioral health. Effective screening occurs at least annually and often three to four times per year. School psychologists also collect information to ensure that all students make adequate progress in academic achievement and mental and behavioral health. Information from screening and progress monitoring is used to identify and define needs at the individual, group, and system levels.
- *School-wide decisions.* School psychologists collaborate with other school and district leaders in order to improve the universal academic and mental health supports that should be available to all students in the general education classroom. When large numbers of students are not achieving academically or behaviorally at the universal level of supports, school psychologists

collaborate purposefully with teachers, administrators, and other instructional specialists to change or adjust programming in order to improve outcomes and reduce the numbers of students needing additional supports.

- *Problem analysis for instruction and intervention planning.* School psychologists engage in assessment to identify the variables that contribute to and maintain educational problems at the individual, group, and system levels. This problem analysis occurs to isolate student needs and provide recommendations for instruction and intervention. Based on this assessment, decisions should optimize the match between student needs and the interventions that are provided.
- *Program evaluation and accountability.* School psychologists consult with teachers and school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention services. In doing so, they promote and review information related to implementation integrity. They also use summative, interim progress monitoring, and other forms of formative assessment information to evaluate outcomes and inform changes.
- *Eligibility and diagnostic decisions.* School psychologists collect, integrate, and synthesize information for each of the previously described decision areas to make eligibility and diagnostic decisions. These decisions substantially impact the lives of students and their families. As such, when students do not respond adequately to the targeted supports and interventions provided to them, school psychologists assist in the design, delivery, and monitoring of intensive supports.

## SUMMARY

NASP recognizes that school psychologists have strong preparation and substantial expertise in both assessment and evaluation. Thus, school psychologists should play important roles in the provision of assessment and evaluation practices conducted within a multitiered system of supports in school and related settings. In particular, school psychologists should contribute to the collection and use of information to guide service delivery and improve outcomes for all students in need of individual, group, and school-wide services.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Assessment* is the collection of information, which might be in narrative or numeric form, for the purpose of making a decision. Assessment contributes to defining problems, identifying student assets and needs, determining current levels of the student functioning, estimating the rate of progress toward well-defined goals, and evaluating program outcomes.

<sup>2</sup>*Evaluation* is the interpretation of information collected during an assessment and its use to guide a decision.

<sup>3</sup>*Evidence-based practices* are those supported by substantial scientific evidence.

<sup>4</sup>*Culturally sensitive practices* in assessment and evaluation are those that confer equivalent advantage to individuals and groups across diverse communities, cultures, genders, races, ethnicities, (dis)abilities, lifestyles, and contexts.

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