

# NASP Advocacy Roadmap for States: Brief Overview of the APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists

Revised 2 20 09

## What is Happening???

- The Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists (Model Act) is an American Psychological Association (APA) policy document which provides recommendations and guidance for the licensing and practice of Psychology. This APA document is often used by state legislatures and licensing boards as they review the standards for the practice of psychology and revise licensing laws.
- APA is presently considering significant changes to the current version of its Model Act.
- Currently, the practice of psychology is primarily monitored by state psychology licensing boards while the practice of school psychology is monitored by Departments of Education or affiliated agencies, which deal with the credentialing of school-based personnel.
- During the last public comment period in 2007, more than 10,000 individuals and 19 state and national mental health and education organizations wrote to APA in support of reinstating the school psychology exemption. These advocacy efforts were partially successful in preventing the advancement of the originally proposed changes by APA as they are now planning to revise their proposed MLA again permitting the use of title and practice by doctoral level school psychologists only. If adopted by state legislatures, this change could potentially remove permission for the use of the title "school psychologist" and restrict the practice of school psychology for all specialist-level school psychologists. A new 90-day public comment period addressing this proposed change is anticipated to open starting March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.
- It is anticipated that the proposed recommendation to the APA's MLA will be placed on the Cross-Cutting Agenda for the APA Spring Consolidated Meetings. It is expected that during spring and summer of 2009, an APA Task Force will review comments that they receive during the public comment period and revise the draft as needed. It is anticipated that by fall 2009, a new draft of the MLA will be submitted to oversight boards (BEA, BPA, CAPP, CEPC), by December 2009 the final MLA draft will be submitted to the APA Board of Directors for their review, and by February 2010 the MLA would be placed the Council Agenda for adoption.
- This removal would seriously impact the profession and current practice of School Psychology by curtailing the use of the title school psychologist and the delivery of school psychological services by non-doctoral personnel. More importantly, this change would severely limit the availability and accessibility of school psychological services to students because there are not enough doctoral level school psychologists to meet the current needs and demands for these services. Membership data collected by NASP estimates that nearly 75% of school psychological services are delivered by educational specialist level school psychologists.

## Implications

If adopted by state legislatures as proposed, the Model Act could:

- Result in the revision of our professional title as the words "psychologist, psychology, and psychological" would be reserved for doctoral level and licensed psychologists only.
- Alter the way we describe the services we provide and create significant confusion about whether services provided by specialist level school psychologists are "eligible" or "sufficient" to meet existing regulatory and statutory requirements. These changes would threaten our professional identity and result in the need for significant revisions to local, state and federal statutes, regulatory language, and other policy and service delivery documents and procedures.
- Significantly disrupt the delivery of critical school psychological services to schools and students in need.
- Contribute to the growing shortage of school mental health professionals available to respond to student needs.
- Restrict the ability of specialist-level school psychologists to deliver a full range of psychological services consistent with their scope of training and practice.
- Impact our ability to bill as eligible service providers for Health Related services under school Medicaid reimbursement programs.
- Create unnecessary conflicts between state departments of education and psychology licensing boards about the licensing, credentialing, and oversight of practice of school psychologists.