

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Sheila Dixon**

*Mayor, City of Baltimore*

**Brian D. Morris**

*Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners*

**Andrés A. Alonso, Ed.D.**

*Chief Executive Officer*

June 2, 2009

James H. Bray, Ph.D.

President

American Psychological Association

750 First Street, N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Dr. Bray:

As the Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools), I am writing to express my opposition to proposed changes in the Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists. We are an urban school district, comprised of 192 schools serving the academic and special education needs of more than 82,000 students. We have encountered significant difficulty in the recruitment of School Psychology staffing to meet the IEP service needs of our children. The difficulty we have experienced in finding and maintaining sufficient School Psychology staffing has resulted in an historic trend of inadequate service for our special education students.

Over the past several years, despite a national shortage of School Psychologists, we have worked extremely hard and spent significant resources to obtain the necessary School Psychology staff to ensure that our students receive the special education services to which they are entitled. All of our current School Psychologists possess a unique combination of graduate training in both clinical psychology and education, and all are all certified by the Maryland State Department of Education as "School Psychologists." In addition, our School Psychologists meet Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) which require completion of a number of requirements, including a graduate degree, specific coursework and experience and school-based, supervised experience.

The revision to the Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists, as proposed in March 2009, could lead to the limitation of clinical practice by non-doctoral School Psychologists. This limitation could result in a lack of sufficient services for children, while in no way improving the clinical quality of psychological services provided to City Schools students. I join with the Maryland State Department of Education and other LEAs in Maryland to strongly recommend that the American Psychological Association should not make the proposed revision, and should instead leave the historic exemption for non-doctoral School Psychologists to practice in the schools under the jurisdiction of State Education Agencies. Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Andrés A. Alonso, Ed.D.

Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Lynn Bufka, Chair, APA Model Act Task Force  
Stacy Skalski, NASP  
Sharon Gorenstein, MSPA

