



MSHA

Maryland
Speech - Language - Hearing
Association

June 18, 2009

"Communication is the key"

Dr. James H. Bray
Assistant Executive Director
Practice, Research and Policy, Practice Directorate
American Psychological Association
750 First Street N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Dr. Bray

I am writing as a Speech Pathologist in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I have completed my 42nd year of service to the profession with children in a variety of settings. I am currently providing interim services to schools when an SLP is on a long term leave and I am also supervising SLPAs.

My experiences with a large number of school psychologists with a variety of educational backgrounds supports my request that you not proceed with your proposal to withhold the designation of "school psychologist" to a person with less than a PhD background. The unique work of the school psychologist on the interdisciplinary team and in support of educational management of children with special needs requires an unusual skill set and personal characteristics that extend beyond the definition of "school psychologist" as defined by attainment of a doctorate.

As another direct service provider and consultant in the school building, I urge the Model Licensure Act (MLA) Task Force to maintain the current language and intent of the MLA as it pertains to exemptions for specialist level school psychologists to use the title "psychologist."

Any loss of this exemption would cause immediate and extensive harm to school children and their families by denying and delaying needed services in the schools. Many of these services are required to be in place in schools by federal law and state regulation.

I urge you to consider the impact that removing the current exemption for school psychologists would have on the schools of Maryland. In an already resource-depleted and stretched educational system, fewer service providers will impact not only students, teachers, and families, but also related service providers and the services that we bring to schools as well.

We suggest that the proposed elimination of the exemption for School Psychologists be withdrawn immediately.

Sincerely,

Gloria Petit-Clair, M.Ed. SLP
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