



Somerset County Public Schools

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May 18, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you as Director of Human Resources for Somerset County Public Schools. It has come to my attention that the American Psychological Association is proposing to change its Model Licensure Act by eliminating the exemption from licensure for specialist level/specialist level School Psychology Practitioners. This letter is to voice **strong opposition** to such an action. This proposal is not in the best interests of children and families for three reasons:

1. The proposal would reduce the work force in our schools by eliminating the positions of the majority of the current School Psychologists, all of whom are specialist level/specialist-level practitioners certified by the Maryland State Department of Education. The level of service delivery to our students with disabilities would be severely impacted. This would mean that even less crisis intervention and prevention services would be available for the general education population. This is simply not acceptable in these difficult times.
2. There is no room in our already pared-down school budgets to hire large numbers of doctoral-level School Psychologists. All school administrators are struggling to maintain current staff levels to avoid overwhelming teachers and support staff.
3. The removal of specialist level/specialist-level School Psychology Practitioners from the landscape of public education in Maryland and around the country would be catastrophic at the State Education Department level. At the local building level, administrators would simply not be able to effectively respond to the immediate needs of large numbers of parents and students. This would create a state of chaos that could easily cause irreparable damage to our students, not to mention the increased liability that local educational agencies would be faced with in the absence of adequate staffing levels.

You must withdraw this proposal immediately.

Sincerely,

Leo Lawson
Human Resources Director
Somerset County Public Schools