



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**  
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*Enhancing the mental health and  
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## **-- MEDIA ALERT--**

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### **National School Psychology Awareness Week—November 10–14, 2008**

**Bethesda, MD**—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has designated November 10–14, 2008 as National School Psychology Awareness Week. Schools around the country are being asked to highlight the role of school psychologists and school-based services in promoting student success. “This year we are focusing on the importance of supporting the needs of the whole child in furthering positive school outcomes,” says NASP President Gene Cash. “Schools can more effectively ensure that all students are ready and able to learn when they address social, emotional, and academic needs, particularly for students who face barriers to learning.”

NASP represents more than 25,500 school psychologists who work in schools and other education and health settings. School psychologists work with parents and educators to ensure that every child has the mental health and learning support they need. “As professionals with training in both mental health and education, school psychologists are uniquely equipped to help schools provide evidence-based services and programs that promote academic achievement and social-emotional wellness,” states Cash. “Our role is to lower, or better yet, eliminate barriers to learning.”

“All children possess tremendous potential,” emphasizes Cash. “Too often, though, they come to school struggling with life challenges that can create barriers to learning—and teaching.” Left unaddressed, issues such as learning difficulties, poor mental and physical health, cultural and linguistic differences, and socioeconomic or family problems can significantly impede school success.

Even the most highly skilled teachers cannot help children achieve their fullest potential unless such barriers to learning and instruction are remedied. "We can make a difference by focusing on factors that lower barriers and support teachers' ability to teach and students' ability to learn," says Cash. Factors that contribute to school success include ensuring that students are physically and mentally healthy, maintaining high expectations, providing quality instruction that meets students' individual learning needs, and providing social, emotional and behavioral supports.

"Ensuring quality, genuinely accessible education for all children is our nation's most important responsibility and wisest investment," says Cash. "Services that lower barriers to learning are not ancillary to this mission but rather central to the supportive educational process necessary to prepare all of America's children for academic success, healthy development, and responsible citizenship."

As part of National School Psychology Awareness Week, NASP has established the national "Difference Maker on Behalf of Children" Program to recognize members of the school community who go to extraordinary lengths to make a difference in the lives of students and their families. School psychologists are identifying and honoring teachers, administrators, parents, and other educators who contribute to student success in an extraordinary way through their daily work and interactions with students. Further information on the program is available online at [www.nasponline.org/communications/spawareness](http://www.nasponline.org/communications/spawareness).

**For further information contact NASP Director of Marketing and Communications, Kathy Cowan at (301) 347-1665 or [kcowan@naspweb.org](mailto:kcowan@naspweb.org), or visit [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org).**

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