



**Indiana  
Association of  
School  
Psychologists**

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James H. Bray, APA President  
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Dear Dr. Bray:

On behalf of its members, the Executive Board of the Indiana Association of School Psychologists (IASP) is writing this letter to strongly suggest that the exemption for school psychologists be reinstated in the APA Model Act for State Licensure of Psychologists. This exemption to the licensure act has ensured the delivery of critical mental health and behavioral services for millions of children and youth by professionals who are appropriately credentialed by their state board of education to hold the title "school psychologist" and to practice independently in school settings. Discussions among our executive board, our membership, and other professional associations from across the country have led IASP to conclude that failure to reinstate this exemption would not in the best interest of children, the public, or the field of psychology.

It is important to note that school psychologists have practiced independently in the schools for at least the last 50 years and that the public in our state is aware of the distinctions between "school psychologists" and psychologists who are licensed at the doctoral level by state boards of psychology. Additionally, protections already exist to ensure the quality of services provided by school psychologists credentialed by their state boards of education. For example, school psychologists in Indiana hold teachers' licenses and are under the jurisdiction of the Indiana State Board of Education.

The removal of the exemption will not provide protection for the public or improve the quality or availability of services to children and youth. In fact, removal of the exemption will be counterproductive at a time when school communities have a great need yet shrinking financial and personnel resources. This change in the MLA exemptions has a high risk of hurting children, families, and schools by creating barriers to receiving services. Placing a barrier by limiting available—and essential—personnel has the potential to cause physical or emotional harm to children and is in direct violation of APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, which under Principle A: Beneficence and Non-Maleficence states that psychologists "take care to do no harm."

The removal of the exemption will compound an already dire problem of a nationwide shortage of school psychologists, which is also of great concern in the state of Indiana. The shortage of school psychologists is particularly severe in many under-resourced urban and rural school settings and is even more critical given a significant unmet need for individuals of minority and



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culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to serve in school settings. Further, removal of the exemption may impede efforts to recruit and advance ethnically and linguistically diverse individuals into the field of school psychology. While increasing trends have been evidenced in recent years, such growth has stalled at the doctoral level. In sum, removing the exemption will work against ameliorating the shortage of school psychologists and will actually exacerbate this problem.

Parents and educators are also aware of the current services that “school psychologists” provide, including psychoeducational assessment, consultation, intervention, and counseling services. Removing the exemption will create unnecessary misunderstandings about the provision of these much needed services in the schools and will result in fewer children having their mental-health needs met. School psychologists are trained at both the specialist and doctoral levels to implement evidence-based prevention strategies and to provide interventions for mental health and learning issues at the individual, group, and school-wide levels. Removing the exemption will lead to a reduction of these services, or insufficient provision of services by under qualified personnel. It is well-documented that school psychologists provide valuable mental health services to children who might not otherwise receive the help they need. It is the opinion of IASP that the only group who could potentially benefit by removing the exemption is licensed psychologists. However, many children in Indiana do not have access to licensed psychologists outside the schools due to issues with insurance, transportation, and proximity. We believe it our ethical responsibility to advocate for and promote the welfare of the children of Indiana’s schools. We also fervently believe that removing the exemption will interfere with this process and ultimately reduce the amount of mental health services being provided to children and their families in our state.

Our organization is aware that the American Psychological Association Model Licensure Act Task Force is receiving letters from many professional organization and individual psychologists from across the country. Please be aware that the practitioners and trainers of school psychology in the state of Indiana are troubled by the possibility of removing the exemption given that we are intimately aware of the negative impact this could have on children, families, and the community. We urge the American Psychological Association Model Licensure Act Task Force to reinstate the exemption for school psychologists. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa L. Clark  
President Indiana Association of School Psychologists