



Adria Ellis, President
601 First Street South
Alabaster, AL 35007

James H. Bray
APA President
American Psychological Association
750 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Bray:

The recent steps taken by APA to disenfranchise a segment of professionals trained to be school psychologists is disturbing to me and to the organization that I represent. I represent the Alabama Association of School Psychologists. The limitation of the use of “psychologist” to those individuals who are licensed by state psychology licensing boards or those with a doctoral degree is a challenge to state boards of education with regard to credentialing. If adopted by the state legislature, it will take the task of training and credentialing school psychologists out of the oversight of the state board of education. Any licensed psychologist will be able to call himself a school psychologist with training that will not be as stringent as the current requirements for school psychology. Current requirements for school psychology include not only training specific to the school setting, but also an internship which immerses the trainee in the culture of the school and the requirements of the law. The proposed change will in effect establish a dumbing down of school psychologists.

There are also concerns about preventing qualified professionals from practicing their trade and exercising their constitutional rights. Limiting those rights will impact a predominately female population. According to data collected from a 2004-05 NASP Survey, 74% of practicing school psychologists are female and 7 out of 10 of them hold non-doctoral degrees. Of the 7.3% of practicing school psychologists who are ethnic minorities, 7 out of 10 hold non-doctoral degrees and so minorities will also be negatively impacted.

There is no solid research to show that making these changes will improve services to school children or that leaving the exemption in place will cause harm to school children. This leaves only one conclusion. The basis for this recommendation by APA must be economic in nature. Certainly if the number of school psychologists is greatly diminished, it will open up a new arena for revenue for psychologists.

I thank you for your time and your consideration of this request for APA to deny the removal of the exemption for school psychologists that has been in place and served our students well for almost 30 years.

Sincerely,

Adria Ellis, President