

June 3, 2009

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

Dear Dr. Bray,

The Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) would like to go on record as opposing the APA's recommendation to eliminate the exemption of school psychologists from its Model Licensure Act and to require them to have a doctoral degree. MESPA is the largest administrator organization in Massachusetts and represents elementary and middle level principals across the state. Our members know very well the importance of well-trained school psychologists and they support and need the functions that they perform. MESPA believes that the school psychologists serving children and families in our schools are well trained based upon accepted state and national standards for the functions that they provide.

At its May 28th Board of Directors' meeting, the Board discussed this proposed change and voted to oppose it for the following reasons:

If this recommendation were to go into effect, it is MESPA's belief that many school psychologists would be unable to keep their positions and give the support to children in their schools. School psychologists are the first or second line of defense for children. Losing them would cause hardship for the children that they serve, would leave many children at risk, and would cause schools to transfer the support of children to other people who may be less qualified. There is already a severe shortage of well-trained school psychologists and this action would exacerbate schools' efforts to fill these crucial positions. Any effort that increases the difficulty of providing services to students, their families and schools would have devastating effects on these children, especially those who are in greatest need.

Schools are undergoing tremendous financial constraints, and replacing school psychologists would be very difficult and would require others within school

systems to take on additional responsibilities. School psychologists in the Commonwealth's schools provide various functions in different schools including, but not limited to, testing, counseling, classroom and family support and training of staff and families. Some do just one of these functions, some do one or more of these functions, and some do all of them. Giving these functions to professionals who have other responsibilities and who are not trained would have disastrous consequences for children and schools.

We strongly urge that this exemption be maintained, and we urge the APA to reconsider its recommendation.

Thank you for considering our point of view.

Sincerely,

Nadya Aswad Higgins
MESPA Executive Director

cc: Deborah Donovan, MESPA President
Lynn Bufka, Chair, APA Model Act Task Force