

SCOPE

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School psychology training, practice and satisfaction survey: A comparative analysis of training and experience of school psychologists in Washington State

Janine M. Jones, Ph.D. & Rachel E. Pemble, MSW
Seattle Pacific University

This survey was developed in response to concerns raised by practitioners in the field of School Psychology. In Washington State, the field of School Psychology has been described as utilizing the traditional "assessment model" of practice. As a result, some school psychologists have indicated that the

"With changes in training perspectives, it stands to reason that school psychology practice would also change to include intervention and consultation as primary service points. However, anecdotal reports suggest that the training that school psychologists receive does not necessarily match with the actual practice in the field"

skills developed in their training programs have been underutilized in actual practice. Additionally, there have been discussions about the need to analyze the turnover of school psychologists since there is a shortage of practitioners in the field.

The shortage of school psychologists is a major issue of concern across the nation. In a research study, Hunley (1998) noted an increase in the number of school psychologists trained in nondoctoral programs, an increase in the school psychologist to student ratio (1:1000+), and an increase in school psychologists who plan to retire within

five years. Likewise, the literature also suggests that burnout rates are high for school psychologists (Mills and Huebner, 1998; Huebner and Mills, 1994; Reiner and Hartshorne, 1982). Although these studies were not based in Washington State, it is likely that

similar trends are occurring within the state of Washington.

According

to the published literature and communications among school psychologists in the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the role of school psychologists has been evolving in some parts of the country and has become stagnant in other parts. Over time, NASP approved programs have evolved to emphasize a generalist perspective where the assessment role yields to interventions and consultation, and assessment is used as a tool to facilitate appropriate problem solving (Ysseldyke, Reschly, Dawson, Reynolds, Lehr, and Telzrow,

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President's Message



Fellow WSASP members,

The WSASP Board is currently gearing up for the Fall 2004 conference at Semiahmoo (see enclosed brochure). Speakers are being engaged and activities have been planned. I am anticipating a very exciting and informative conference. The Conference brochure is included as an insert in this edition of the SCOPE.

Along with Fall Conference preparations, we are currently seeking nominations for several awards to present at the fall conference. Information regarding these awards is included on the opposite page, with more detailed information provided at www.WSASP.org. Please make your nominations and return them by September 10th.

These next two months will be my final ones in office. Serving as president has been a very rewarding experience (it has also been stressful). Fortunately, I presided over an executive board that has been very supportive of me during my term. I would like to take this time and thank them for lending their talents to this organization.

William D. Wood, III, Ph.D.
WSASP President

Attention WSASP Members!!

Please read the following important announcements regarding changes to the membership year, collection of annual dues, strategic planning, and open positions on the 2004 - 2005 WSASP Board.

- ◆ The WSASP Executive Board recently voted to change the beginning of the membership year to October 1st of each year. This change has numerous benefits as it aligns more closely with WSASP's Fall Conference. Experience has taught the board that many members forget they renewed their membership in the spring, and pay their dues a second time with their fall conference registration. The Board hopes to eliminate this confusion by aligning the beginning of the membership year with the Fall Conference.
- ◆ In addition, the Executive Board has made the decision to include the cost of WSASP membership as part of the Fall Conference fee. Current members who do not attend the Fall 2004 Conference will receive renewal notices by mail in late October. Please note: Your current membership benefits will continue until October 1st, 2004. Current members should not experience an interruption of membership benefits as a result of this change.
- ◆ The WSASP Executive Board will be meeting June 23rd and 24th to conduct strategic planning for the association. If you have feedback or suggestions you would like the board to consider during this planning session, please forward your ideas to any board member. Contact information for all current board members may be found on the back, inside cover of this issue of the SCOPE.
- ◆ Finally, The WSASP Board is attempting to fill two open positions on the 2004 - 2005 Executive Board. Representation on the Board is needed from Area 2 (Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, and Grant Counties) and Area 4 (Clallam, Jefferson, North Grays Harbor, and South Mason Counties). If you are interested in serving as an Area Representative from either of these areas, or if you would like more information, contact William Wood at woodwd@earthlink.net.

WSASP Awards Committee solicits nominations for four awards to be presented at Fall 2004 Conference



The WSASP Awards committee is currently accepting nominations for four awards which will be presented at the Fall 2004 Conference at Semiahmoo. Each of the awards recognizes individuals or programs who have demonstrated exemplary practice or made significant contributions to the field of school psychology. Please take a minute to read the criteria associated with each award, and consider nominating a colleague who deserves recognition from his/her peers.

Best Practices Awards: Best Practice Awards may be presented in any of the following categories: Assessment, Intervention, Consultation, Education/Supervision, and Research/Program Evaluation. Nominations should be made in the form of a letter identifying the nominee, the Best Practice category under which the nomination is being made, and a description of the best practice behaviors demonstrated by the nominee. Selection of finalists will depend on the degree to which the application describes recommended best practice or describes an innovative practice likely to be effective, and the degree to which the practice has overcome common barriers to effective practice. At the committee's discretion, additional documentation may be sought from supervisors and consumers, including telephone interviews and site visits. Applications which include data documenting effectiveness, will be rated more highly than those that do not.

Acceptance of Best Practices Award by a finalist obligates the finalist to give a presentation regarding the practice at the Association's Fall Conference. A paper presentation or a panel discussion may meet this obligation. The President will present the award to the finalist at a public function during the annual meeting. The Association will pay the conference registration fee for the finalist and will pay the finalist the regular compensation for invited speakers.

Letters of nomination should be sent to William Wood by September 10th, 2004, at the address listed at the bottom of this page. Additional information about this award and the selection process may be found at wsasp.org/awards.pdf.

Louisa Thompson Award: This award recognizes individuals for outstanding contributions to the Association. The award was set up in recognition of Louisa Thompson, one of the founders of the Association. She held multiple leadership roles in school psychology and was recognized for her dynamic personality, extraordinary drive and deter-

mination from the beginning of her career in 1967 until her sudden and unexpected death in 1982. The recipient must be a member of WSASP and one whose contributions, commitment, quality of service and accomplishments represent those of Louisa Thompson. This award contrasts with the School Psychologist of the Year Award in that it focuses on the boundless variety of the Association affairs rather than on direct services to children, teachers, and parents.

Nominations should be made in the form of a letter identifying the nominee and describing the nominee's contributions to WSASP. The letters should be sent to William Wood by September 10th, 2004 at the address listed at the bottom of this page. Additional information about Louisa Thompson and the selection process may be found at wsasp.org/awards.pdf.

School Psychologist of the Year Award: This award may be presented to a School Psychologist who demonstrates excellence across a broad range of domains, which may include assessment, intervention, consultation, supervision, research/evaluation, and advocacy for their clients, community, or profession. The nominee should have personal characteristics, which include high ethical standards, effective interpersonal skills, and a dedication to improving conditions for children, families, schools, and communities. Nominees will need to have been trained as School Psychologists and be primarily engaged in the practice of School Psychology in Washington State during the year prior to receiving the award.

School Psychologists, Area Representatives, and Special Education Directors may nominate practicing school psychologists. It is not required that the nominee be a member of the Association. The winner of this award will receive a one-year free WSASP membership. In addition, School Psychologist of the Year award winners will be considered by the President to be nominated for the National Association of School Psychologists' School Psychologist of the Year Award.

Nominations must be in writing, and should include a statement identifying how the nominee meets the award criteria, and at least three reference letters from individuals familiar with the nominee's work. Members of the selection

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Please mail nominations to: William Wood, 6402 Phinney Ave. N #2, Seattle, WA 98103

Survey Results, continued from page 1

1997). With changes in training perspectives, it stands to reason that school psychology practice would also change to include intervention and consultation as primary service points. However, anecdotal reports suggest that the training that school psychologists receive does not necessarily match with the actual practice in the field, particularly in states that endorse a traditional assessment model of service delivery.

The intent of this survey was to give voice to a collective mass of school psychologists in Washington State. The results of the survey capture impressions from these practitioners in the field. It is proposed that training experience, practice, and job satisfaction, may be major factors affecting the shortage of school psychology professionals. Thus, data from this survey may be considered for districts seeking to reduce turnover and increase job satisfaction.

Method

The Survey of School Psychologists was developed by the principal investigator and reviewed by colleagues and other professionals familiar with survey research. This survey examined educational background information, preparedness from training, actual experience, satisfaction ratings, and desire for changes in the school psychologist's role in schools. There was also an opportunity for the respondents to provide qualitative comments about their experience as a school psychologist in Washington State.

The sample consisted of 323 Washington State certified school psychologists who responded to the survey in the Spring of 2002. The study sample was drawn from a list of 1,107 school psychologists that was developed from the following sources: 1) Office of State and Public Instruction certification, 2) membership roster of the Washington State Association of School Psychologists, and the 3) membership list of Nationally Certified School Psychologists from the National Association of School Psychologists. Using the three data sources increased the probability of reaching all school psychologists in the state of Washington.

Results

Training

Sixty-five percent of the respondents received their training in a school psychology program while 14% were trained in a school psychology/school counseling combined program. Seventeen percent of the sample was trained in programs designated as "other area" such as developmental psychology, clinical psychology, applied behavioral analysis, or education.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents were trained in Washington State while the remaining 45% were trained in other states. Only 1% of the sample was trained in another country. In terms of academic degrees, 61% were trained at the master's level, 23% were trained at the education specialist level, and 15% were trained at the doctoral level.

The data on the number of years since the school psychologist's training program suggests that the school psychologists in Washington State are rather new to the field. As shown in Table 1, the highest proportion of the sample fell within the 0-5 year range.

Table 1
Number of Years Since Training Program

Years	Percent
0 - 5	24.9
6 - 10	21.5
11 - 15	14.4
16 - 20	12.8
21 - 25	13.7
26 - 30	9.5
31 - 40	3.1

The results revealed that the majority of school psychologists in the state have been out of their training program for less than 10 years. In fact, the highest percentage was within five years of the training program. This suggests that the majority of school psychologists are relatively new to the profession. As the number of years of experience increase, the numbers decline. It may be extrapolated that in 10 years, school psychologists in the state begin to retire or leave their positions. As a result, there is likely to be a significant impact on the shortage of school psychologists.

Training program coursework. The majority of the survey respondents were trained in school psychology programs and the emphasis of the training was in the area of assessment. The highest average number of courses (by content area) was in the area of assessment. The second highest domain of training was in counseling, while research and consultation were the areas of least emphasis.

Practice

The data was analyzed to determine the amount of time the school psychologist spends in each professional activity. The professional activities included: counseling, assessment, research, and consultation. Table 2 (opposite page) shows that the majority of the school psychologist's time is divided between assessment and consultation, with lower proportions of time spent in counseling and research.

When comparing the assessment, counseling, and consultation numbers, the highest proportion of time was spent in assessment activities. Forty-eight percent of respondents stated that they spend eight hours a week or less on consultation activities. Ninety-six percent spend eight hours or less in research, and eighty-three percent spend less than eight hours in counseling.

Continued . . .

Survey Results, continued from previous page

Table 2
Percentage of Time Spent in Professional Activities

	Counseling	Assessment	Research	Consultation
0 - 8 hours	83.2%	15.7%	96.5%	48.6%
9 - 16 hours	12.7%	31.4%	2.9%	37.1%
17 - 24 hours	2.5%	25.3%	.6%	12.1%
25 - 32 hours	1.0%	19.9%		2.2%
33 - 40 hours	.6%	7.7%		7.7%

Training vs. Practice

Coursework and preparation for practice rating. Several analyses were completed to analyze the variables in relationship to the school psychologists' ratings of their level of preparation. Those who achieved National Certification in School Psychology (NCSP) rated themselves as significantly more prepared than their colleagues.

Correlation analyses were used to compare the school psychologist's rating of preparation for practice and the courses completed in each domain area. The correlations suggest that school psychologists who had more counseling, assessment, and consultation courses rated their level of preparation higher than those who had fewer courses.

Coursework and actual practice. In an analysis of the amount of training received in each domain of courses compared to the amount of time spent in the same professional activity, the findings suggested that there is no significant connection between the training courses received and the actual time spent in professional activities (in the proportions that they were trained).

Role Satisfaction

The majority of the respondents were relatively satisfied with their role. Fourteen percent of the school psychologists were "very satisfied" and 36% were "content" with their job. However, 23% rated their level of satisfaction as "discouraged" and 7% indicated "dissatisfaction."

Preparation and satisfaction rating. School psychologists' ratings of their level of preparation were highest for individuals who have achieved the national certification in school psychology. High preparation ratings were also highest for those with the highest number of assessment and counseling courses. This is likely to be due to the fact that the majority of the school psychology professional's time was spent in assessment activities. Although few school psychologists indicated spending a lot of time in counseling activities, some may feel that the counseling skills they obtained in their training program are still utilized in daily interactions.

It was anticipated that the individuals with highest level of training and more advanced degrees would have the opportunity to shape their professional experience to their skill

set; however, the data did not prove this to be the case. Since there was no significant relationship between the degree level and the level of satisfaction, it appears that Washington State school psychologists continue to serve in the traditional assessment model regardless of their educational background.

Practice activities and satisfaction rating. With regard to satisfaction rates, results indicated that the school psychologists with the highest satisfaction rates were providing consultation services in the highest proportions. Thus, providing consultation services was the highest predictor for the level of satisfaction. The other professional activities did not reveal a significant relationship with level of satisfaction.

Changing the role of school psychologists

The survey respondents' responses in this section revealed significant differences in every area of professional activity. First, the relationship between the amount of research time and desire for change in research time was statistically significant. Those school psychologists spending 0-8 hours of their time in research would prefer to spend between 9-16 hours a week in research.

Similarly, the relationship between the amount of counseling time and time school psychologists would prefer to spend in counseling was statistically significant. Respondents would prefer to spend more time in counseling activities.

The analysis of consultation time and preference for consultation activities was also statistically significant. The school psychologists spending between 0-8 hours of their time in consultation would prefer to spend between 9-16 hours a week in consultation. Similarly, those spending between 9-16 hours a week in consultation would prefer spending between 17-24 hours per week in consultation. Thus, the respondents would prefer to spend more time in consultation activities.

The final area of analysis was to indicate the relationship between assessment activities and the respondent's preference for changing the amount of time spent in assessment activities. This analysis revealed a statistically significant

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Survey Results, continued from previous page.

relationship in the opposite direction. The results revealed that the respondents would prefer to spend less time in assessment activities. Those spending 25-40 hours per week in assessment related activities indicated a desire to spend between 0-16 hours. Thus, school psychologists would prefer spending significantly less time in assessment and more time providing other services such as consultation, counseling, and research.

Overall, school psychologists clearly expressed a desire to change the

role to one that requires less time in assessment related activities and to increase the amount of time

spent in other activities such as counseling, consultation, and research. Although school psychologists recognize the value and importance of assessment, it appears that they would also like to expand their responsibilities.

Qualitative analysis

Since the survey respondents were provided an opportunity to provide comments in an open-ended format at the end of the survey, the responses were evaluated for common themes. Three major themes became apparent in this section: paperwork, caseload, and salary.

The paperwork theme was addressed in 45% of the comments provided by respondents. The respondents who addressed this theme all indicated a concern about the amount of time they spend completing IDEA compliance paperwork and report writing. The complaints were related to having to devote too much time to writing and too little time to other activities such as counseling and consultation.

The second major theme was a complaint about the high amount of assessment required in their caseload. The respondents felt that the large proportion of time spent in assessment was another factor that contributed to their inability to complete other professional activities and serve children in the manner in which they were trained. This complaint occurred in 12% of the comments provided by respondents.

The third theme that was noted in the comments section was a complaint about the salaries for school psychologists. Six percent of the respondents' comments indicated dissatisfaction with the pay and the fact that school psychologists are placed on the same pay scale as teachers.

Conclusion

There is significant evidence to support the anecdotal reports of school psychologists in the state of Washington.

Although the practitioners in the state are relatively satisfied with their positions, they would prefer to reshape their positions to be more diverse. School Psychologists are trained in a variety of areas, but the current practice does not provide opportunities to use all of their skills with regularity. The preferences indicated were to reduce the amount of time in assessment and increase the time spent in counseling, consultation, and research. Additionally, the school psychologists with the highest satisfaction rates were those that provided consultation services in the greatest proportions.

“Overall, school psychologists clearly expressed a desire to change the role to one that requires less time in assessment related activities and to increase the amount of time spent in other activities such as counseling, consultation, and research. Although school psychologists recognize the value and importance of assessment, it appears that they would also like to expand their responsibilities”

The survey results reveal that many school psychologists in Washington are ready to embrace positive changes. It is important to make

these changes before burnout occurs and a large number of school psychologists pursue work in other areas and these professionals are lost to other more lucrative or more satisfying areas of professional pursuit.

These findings have implications for policy and reshaping the practice. With changes in state and federal law in progress, now is the time to respond to reform efforts within the profession. If school district administrators address the concerns of school psychologists and make attempts to shape the positions to match the training and interests of the professional as well as the needs of the school, the turnover and burnout rates may be significantly reduced.

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The Elusive Phoneme

Tom Langdon, Federal Way School District

Editor's Note: Tom Langdon, a school psychologist with the Federal Way School District, is a regular contributor to the Federal Way Mirror. He has had numerous articles published in The Mirror over the last year on topics related to education and building a culture of literacy. This article, The Elusive Phoneme, was first published in The Mirror as one in a series on building literacy skills. It is reprinted here with the express permission of the author as well as the editor of The Federal Way Mirror.

There are many factors required for an emerging reader to acquire the fundamental skills necessary to initial basic reading. Three of the essential basic skill knowledge areas are print awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and phonemic awareness. Of the three, phonemic awareness is as essential as it is elusive for many young and old readers alike.

Simply stated print awareness is knowing that the print on the page represents the "talk" from our mouth. Alphabetic awareness basically means that beginning readers know that letters are called by different names based on their shape and sound. But phonemic awareness is different. It is elusive and slippery when it comes to gaining a firm understanding of what it is, what it does, and how very important it is to reading, spelling, and writing. Readers who are not skilled in their phonological knowledge and skills will never be good readers or spellers, and may spell a word like *basketball* as *bastetoal*, or *follow* as *phallo*.

The English language has 44 speech sounds. That is to say, all the words in the English language consists of the 44 sounds or *phonemes* as they are called. So we have 26 letters and 44 individual speech sounds or phonemes that account for all of the words in the English language. Phonemic awareness is the reader's understanding that the 44 phonemes that constitute our oral language are represented in some combination by the 26 letters of the English language. Moreover, the letters take on the sounds of the oral language represented in the printed word. The extent to which students understand the relationship between and among oral sounds (phonemes) and how the relationship translates to print, which is not always one to one, is the extent to which reading will emerge.

The problem involved with understanding this relationship conceptually, at least in part, comes from our desire to perceive the relationship between sound to symbol as one to one, not 26:44. You see, a word that has only two letters may be represented by three phonemes such as the word *ox*, /o/ /k/ /s/, and the single phoneme /k/ may be represented by the letters *k*, *c*, or *ck*. Additionally, we never have to "think"

about our oral utterances as phonemes as we are born with a predetermined genetic code that allows us not to have to think about them. Their development in our oral language learning is inherent to our species, and therefore the learning is automatic, taking little attention and motivation. Phonological functioning at the oral utterance level (talking level) is a natural part of our growth and development. However, at the print level learning, attention, and motivation are required.

When we read, we are simply mediating our oral language by print. We are translating or superimposing the individual sounds or phonemes (44) representing our oral utterances onto the 26 symbols that represent our English alphabet so that we can read our talk.

"Alphabetic awareness basically means that beginning readers know that letters are called by different names based on their shape and sound. But phonemic awareness is different. It is elusive and slippery when it comes to gaining a firm understanding of what it is, what it does, and how very important it is to reading, spelling, and writing."

Most of us do this with some to little effort. However, some of us just do not "get" the relationship. It has very little to do with our intellectual ability.

Most of us are born with a process that makes the relationship between the 44 and the 26 relatively easy to learn; almost intuitive. It is not that the lucky ones do not have to learn the relationship, it is just that the connections are made more easily. However, for the unlucky ones where there is no intuitive understanding, learning to read, spell, and write can be an absolute nightmare for the student, their parents, and their teachers. The failure becomes inexplicable and before long the lengthy finger of blame is being indiscriminately pointed about.

The good news is that those students who have poor phonemic awareness can be taught those skills. However, the bad news is that most teachers are not well trained in phonological instructional methodologies and, the necessary research-validated curricula, instrumental to the phonological instruction, are relatively few. This situation is the result of very poor reading methodology classes in most of the teacher training programs throughout the country, as well as the time consuming nature of translating validated research into curricular practice.

All children should have phonics instruction as a basic part of their beginning reading program. Phonics is

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What's New with NASP?

Ken Greff, school psychologist from Washington State, selected as finalist for NASP School Psychologist of the Year!

Tom Delaney, Washington State Delegate

Congratulations to Ken Greff who was selected as a finalist for NASP's School Psychologist of the Year! Finalists were selected from Alaska (Joe Gerard), New York (Catherine Cattell) and Washington State (Kenneth Greff). Ken is a school psychologist for the Northshore School District and works at Bothel High School. He was the 2002 WSASP School Psychologist of the Year. He is well known throughout Washington for his work on school safety and positive school climate. Joe Gerard, the candidate from Alaska, was selected as NASP's 2004 School Psychologist of the Year. Michael Curtis was selected to receive the 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Many thanks to all of you who have renewed your NASP memberships or joined for the first time this year. Memberships in Washington state are back up. NASP membership nationally has also surged. Total new members through February 29th: 2,142.

NASP's Convention 2004 Dallas was a success. Pre-registration closed February 27, with 150 more registrants than any previous NASP convention (consistently, seven to four weeks out). The convention was well-attended and featured a keynote by Sally Shaywitz, M.D. and Bennett Shaywitz, M.D. on their brain imaging research on students with learning disabilities and dyslexia.

The following new items can be found on the NASP website: (http://www.naspweb.org/Members_Only_Test/welcome2.asp)

- ◆ Now available: "Working With Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth: A Training Curriculum for School Psychologists," a series of Powerpoint training modules with accompanying notes, references, and supporting materials. The series includes the following:
 - ◆ Basic Training Module I: Social Challenges Facing GLB Youth - PowerPoint
 - ◆ Basic Training Module II: Identifying as Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual: Self-Acceptance and Coming-Out - PowerPoint
 - ◆ Basic Training Module III: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth: Mental Health Issues and Counseling - PowerPoint
 - ◆ Basic Training Module IV: The School Psychologist's Role in Creating a Positive School Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth - PowerPoint



Ken Greff (left), a finalist for NASP School Psychologist of the Year, accepts congratulations from Tom Delaney, NASP Delegate from Washington state.

- ◆ Download a NASP 101 Powerpoint! (A walk-through of how NASP is organized and works for you).
- ◆ Now collected in one place: CQ handouts and articles, optimized for your Palm!

If you've already renewed your membership, thank you. As a thanks for renewing your membership, we've created several bonus items especially for you:

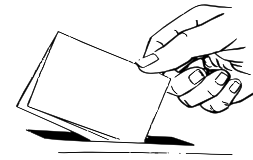
- ◆ Interventions Online
- ◆ NASP Resources at a Glance
- ◆ A NASP screensaver for your computer (PC version and Mac OS 8 or 9 version)
- ◆ A downloadable membership certificate that you can print
- ◆ Kept by popular demand - the previous edition of Interventions Online: Learning Disabilities and Problems.

You can also register for the popular SOS High School Suicide Prevention Program or obtain more information about this program online.

Finally, I was recently elected a Delegate Representative for the Western Region of NASP, which means I will be representing you on the Executive Council of NASP. The Executive Council includes the NASP officers and office staff and initiates programs and proposals that go to the Delegate Assembly and manages NASP's budget and ongoing programs and initiatives.

Washington Education Association Representative Assembly Votes to Support School Psychologists

Anna LaSalle, Spokane Public Schools



VOTE

Each year, the Washington Education Association's (WEA's) Representative Assembly conducts the business of the Association by voting on resolutions (statements regarding what the WEA believes) and on action to be taken by WEA in the legislature and on other fronts during the upcoming year. This year, over 1,100 elected representatives met from March 25th – 27th, 2004 in Spokane's Convention Center.

Items on which the representatives are asked to vote often spur heavy debate. Questions addressed by representatives who attended this year's assembly included the following. Should the WEA budget for and prepare to file with other stake-holder groups a lawsuit against the state of Washington for its failure to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders as required under Article IX of the state constitution? Should WEA work to change the professional certification requirements that were implemented for teachers in 2000? Should WEA implement strategies to change the continuing education requirement for certificated staff who achieved a Masters + 90 credits so that either compensation is provided or the requirement is eliminated? Should WEA make available small auto decals of the WEA logo to all members each year?

However, when it came to members' beliefs regarding the important roles that school psychologists play in promoting student success and what constitutes an appropriate school psychologist to student ratio, there was no debate. The following resolutions were proposed on behalf of the WSASP Board and passed with overwhelming support:

1. Whereas, school psychologists are educational and mental health professionals who help children and youth overcome barriers to success in school, at home, and in life;

Now, therefore be it resolved, That the WEA believes that through school psychologists' use of assessment, consultation, intervention and prevention programming, inservice education, research/planning, and provision of mental health services; school psychologists are an integral component of a successful learning environment.

2. The WEA believes that each affiliate should include in its master contract the following relevant provisions as a minimum:

School psychologist to student ratio of no more than 1:1000

It should be noted that the above items are statements of philosophy. In order for caseloads of 1:1000 (the ratio recommended by NASP) to become a reality in districts that currently exceed this figure, local bargaining units need to advocate for the inclusion of such language in their contracts.

A new business item that directly affects school psychologists and calls for immediate action is also worthy of mention. It stipulates:

That WEA advocate for equal recognition and financial compensation for ESAs who receive national certification in the same manner as teachers who receive National Board Certification.

Overall, it was encouraging to witness over 1,100 delegates from across the state voting in support of school psychologists and other ESAs. This writer suspects that if the children who school psychologists help to "overcome barriers to success in school, at home, and in life" and their families were to vote on these measures, the enthusiasm for their passage would have been even more overwhelming.



Attention NASP 2004 Convention Attendees!!

*If you attended the NASP 2004 Convention,
Washington clock hours are available to you at no cost.
To apply for clock hours, contact Jacquie Jensen,
WSASP Representative for OSPI Inservice Certification, at
(360) 657-0994 or jacquiejensen@usa.net*



The Elusive Phoneme, continued from page 7. . . .

an instructional methodology that teaches the relationship between alphabetic symbols and their sounds. The most effective phonics instructional methods are explicit and systematic in their approach. They teach the alphabetic code directly, consistently, systematically, and relentlessly. Most children when exposed to these direct methods become good readers. However, all the phonics in the world will be unable to instruct those children who do not have strong phonemic awareness and resultant phonological skills.

Here is the essence of the problem or failure. First, not all schools teach basic, explicit, systematic, consistent and relentless phonics. And secondly, most reading curricula initiate reading instruction at the sound/symbol level, not at the phonological level. This approach completely ignores those children who do not have the requisite phonological skills that are basic, necessary, and instrumental to learning the al-

phabetic code. And what makes matters considerably more dire is the fact that given the present and systemic nature of reading instruction in this country, those students who do not have a functional and fluent knowledge of the alphabetic code by the end of second grade have a significantly higher probability of never being an average reader than they do of being an average reader. The reason this is true resides in an educational system that has not fully understood the nature of the problem nor the nature of the solution.

The good news is that the necessary knowledge to solve this problem for a number of our students is here and it is beginning to spread its healing powers. This in turn is changing the basic nature of reading instruction, allowing good teachers to assist all students to read well. There is a long road to travel before such instruction becomes common place, but the journey has begun.

Mark your calendar!!

ANNOUNCING WSASP's FALL 2004 CONFERENCE

School Psychology: A Focus on Intervention

October 14th - 16th, 2004

Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine, WA

(For more information, see brochure included in this mailing)

Awards, continued from page 3. . . .

committee may further interview nominees, nominators, and references at their discretion. All nomination material should be sent to William Wood by September 10th, 2004 at the address listed at the bottom of page 3. Additional information about this award and the selection process may be found at wsasp.org/awards.pdf.

School Psychology Services Award: This is an award which may be given to departments, schools, districts, clinics, hospitals, or other corporate entities, which exemplify effective School Psychology practice in assessment, intervention, consultation, supervision, or research/evaluation. It is intended as the district/agency equivalent of the School Psychologist of the Year award, that is, a model of best practices delivered broadly by psychology departments to the school. The district/agency must employ individuals trained as School Psychologists, be involved in the delivery of psychological services in Washington state to children and families in educational settings, or the delivery of psychological services to school staff and administrators to resolve schooling-related problems.

Written nominations in the form of a letter should identify the nominated program and describe the extent to which the program engages in best practices in School Psychology with regard to assessment, intervention, consultation, supervision, and research/evaluation. Applications containing effectiveness data will be considered more highly than those that do not. At the committee's discretion and with the permission of the nominee, School Psychologist employees or consumers may be interviewed or the site may be visited to aid the committee in determining the finalist.

The President will present the award to the recipient at the public function at the Association's annual meeting. Acceptance of the award will carry the obligation of the district/agency to make a presentation at the Association's Fall Conference describing their program. The letter of nomination should be sent to William Wood by September 10th, 2004 at the address listed at the bottom of page 3. Additional information about the School Psychology Services Award and the selection process may be found at wsasp.org/awards.pdf.



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(Note: A map identifying WSASP AREA Boundaries may be found on the WSASP webpage, at www.WSASP.org)

Articles & Pictures Needed for the Summer Edition of the SCOPE

The editor welcomes reviews of innovative programs, tests, books, etc.; education related research; letters to the editor; announcements; photos; cartoons

Submit by July 24th, 2004 to:
mbrowning37@comcast.net

Thanks to all those contributed to this issue!!

www.WSASP.org



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