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ECATS has landed!

Although this data system is in early stages of being built, some general information is below

The Exceptional Children Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS) is comprised of three integrated modules accessed from a single user interface based upon role security: Special Education, Medicaid, and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) modules. ECATS also contains a combined set of data or Operational Data Store (ODS) from the three modules, referred to as the “ECATS ODS”. ECATS will have direct data interface with the Student Information System (SIS) PowerSchool and other NCDPI enterprise systems.

ECATS serves NCDPI and all current and future North Carolina Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Charter Schools, Regional Schools, Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind Schools (ESDB), and other public schools and entities under their purview as the need may arise (referred to individually as “PK-13 Educational Institution or collectively as “PK-13 Educational Institutions).

Learn more about ECATS and stay updated on new information as it becomes available by visiting their website, linked [here](#).

About the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:

The North Carolina DPI provides leadership to 115 local public school districts and 160 charter schools serving over 1.5 million students in kindergarten through high school graduation. The agency is responsible for all aspects of the state’s public school system and works under the direction of the North Carolina State Board of Education.



STUDENT • SCHOOL • PARENT • COMMUNITY

School Mental Health Policy Approved by the State Board of Education

Proposed by the NC School Mental Health Initiative (an inter-agency partnership with broad representation from public educators, community-based mental health clinicians, lawyers, advocates, university faculty and parents), the intent of this policy is to help ensure that public school students in North Carolina have equitable access to a full continuum of high-quality and well-coordinated socio-emotional/behavioral health services. Components of the policy are as follows:

Each Local Education Agency (LEA)/charter school shall develop and implement a plan for assessing and improving upon the effectiveness of existing supports for the mental health and substance use needs of its student population (including prevention, early intervention and referral).

LEAs/charter schools are encouraged to include the following strategies:

- Integrate social and emotional learning strategies across the curriculum and within the entire school environment, including, but not limited to the integration of the NC Guidance Essential Standards and the Healthful Living Essential Standards.
- Incorporate evaluation of understanding and use of social and emotional learning strategies in classroom/school management into the annual performance appraisal of teachers and administrators.
- Improve staffing ratios for licensed specialized instructional support personnel such as school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers, to improve student access to school health professionals.

DPI is to provide support (guidance, technical assistance, materials, professional development assistance). LEAs to make plans for needed staff professional development.

View the entire policy [here](#)

Standard 2: School Psychologists Promote A Respectful Environment For Diverse Populations

School Psychologists Support High Expectations for All Students

Reflections on Standard 2:

School Psychologists—

- Maintain **high expectations** for **all students**
- **Appreciate differences** and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment by building positive, appropriate relationships
- Assist students, individually and in groups, in developing social, affective, and adaptive skills
- **Understand learning and instruction** and use such knowledge to **assist school personnel in developing evidence-based interventions** that support and **encourage high expectations** for **all students**
- Understand the importance of early reading and math literacy in supporting high expectations for all students and **promoting high school graduation rates**
- Assist school personnel in the **assessment, analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation** of prevention and **intervention programs** to promote effective early reading and math literacy skills for all students

An area of alignment with this standard is improving outcomes for students with disabilities. According to 2014-2015 graduation data in NC, approximately 63% of students with disabilities graduated high school compared to 82.5% of all students. This tells us that, despite receiving special education services, students with disabilities' educational performance is not accelerating at a rate to close gaps in performance and "catch up" with general education peers.

In order to assist in addressing this issue, the NC DPI EC Division has developed an [LEA Self-Assessment Process](#). The purpose of the LEA Self-Assessment is to support LEA, regional, and state data analysis and planning to enhance current practice and improve the educational outcomes of students with disabilities. As a result of this process, some areas that have been identified for universal support are specific to IEP development, implementation and progress monitoring of IEP goals.

School psychologists are intricately involved in the special education identification process; therefore, it is imperative that the data used to determine eligibility of students with disabilities is also used purposefully as a basis through which effective instructional programming can be derived. Strong baseline data are the foundation of substantive IEP goals. A meaningful synthesis of multiple sources of data collected and reviewed through an evaluation should feed forward to the IEP team and result in an informative IEP development process.

Additionally, performance gaps can only be narrowed when we use data to inform instructional decisions; therefore, a strong system of progress monitoring needs to be established to assess the effectiveness of specially designed instruction and inform instructional decisions for students with IEPs. The sense of urgency with which we must approach the design, delivery and monitoring of the IEP is paramount, as the gaps are wider for our students with disabilities. Expected growth for these students must be accelerated in order to improve outcomes.

School psychologists can learn more about aligning Standard 2 with supporting high expectations and improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities by:

- Understanding the [LEA Self-Assessment Process](#) through reviewing the available information and knowing their LEA's improvement plan
- Understanding their LEA and/or school performance data for students with disabilities
- Reviewing the NC DPI Exceptional Children Division issued [Guidance on Specially Designed Instruction and Progress Monitoring](#) of IEP goals

If this newsletter was forwarded to you by a colleague and you would like to receive it directly, sign up for the [DPI School Psychology Listserv](#)

School Psychology Workforce Data

Summary: In February/March, the annual school psychology workforce and service delivery survey was conducted. The results indicate that, although it appears that the number of positions have grown this year, the number of vacancies have also grown. It appears that some of the growth in positions is related to the fact that small districts that previously did not employ a school psychologist have now hired at least one school psychologist to serve the LEA. Overall, the number of districts that do not employ school psychologists appears to have decreased by ~50%.

The average staffing ratio in NC continues to be nearly 3 times the recommended staffing ratio for

delivery of comprehensive services, based on the NASP recommended ratio of 1:500-700. The average ratio in the state continues to be approximately 1:2000. There were no LEAs that met the 1:700 ratio and very few (4) that currently have a staffing ratio of (~1:1000).

Funding sources for school psychologist positions continue to be largely through special education monies, despite the basis of the staffing ratio being on total student population, or average daily membership (ADM).

Look for the further details in the full report, to be published in May

BRIGHT SPOT FEATURE

Roanoke Rapids Graded School District

The need for school psychologists in NC's rural areas is a frequent topic of discussion. Last year, Roanoke Rapids Graded School District (Northeast Region) did not employ a school psychologist.

The article below highlights how that landscape is changing:

[Spotlight on Roanoke Rapids](#)

Bright Spots Feature

Find the bright spots...and then replicate them

School psychology departments and/or individuals within them are doing great work across the state on a regular basis throughout the school year.

Details for submitting a Bright Spot feature:

- Submissions should reference the appropriate professional standard linked to the work (e.g., *As school psychologists, we assist in promoting a respectful environment for diverse populations. In this feature, we would like to share how we have partnered with other specialized instructional support personnel to promote a safe and respectful school climate for all by...*)
- Submissions can align with any general awareness that is recognized for a particular month (e.g., *Learning Disabilities Awareness (October), Bullying Prevention (October), Brain Injury Awareness (March), Autism Awareness (April), etc.*)
- Submissions should include the name and brief description of the LEA/school/charter school and school psychologists/other education staff involved, with either a link or contact information for interested parties to obtain additional information.
- Submissions should be limited to 600 words or less (may include photos) OR a brief video clip describing the work (less than 5 minutes)
- All submissions should be emailed to: DPIschoolpsychology@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE: submission of a Bright Spot feature is implied consent to use the names and information provided in DPI communications such as the newsletter—please obtain permission from any others whose names you include (student names should not be included). All submissions will be considered for publication in the newsletter; however, it is not guaranteed that all submissions will be published.

***The NC DPI School Psychology Newsletter is a quarterly publication.
Look for the Summer issue in July 2017.***

MTSS & SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY:

As the [NC DPI Division of Integrated Academic and Behavior Systems](#) continues to support NC public schools in their establishment of an infrastructure for effective MTSS implementation, a section of each School Psychology Newsletter will be dedicated to addressing areas of relevance to practitioners, regardless of their background or the stage of MTSS implementation within their district.

The focus in the Winter Newsletter was *Establishing Readiness and Communication* with school psychologists as districts begin installation of an MTSS school improvement infrastructure.

In this issue, we continue with the theme of **Communication** and also address aspects of **Professional Learning** by sharing a district spotlight from Alamance Burlington School System.

Check out the video clip below, which provides descriptions of how school psychologists communicate and enhance their skills in order to effectively support MTSS implementation:

[ABSS School Psychology & MTSS Communication Structure & Support](#)

For more information on how the ABSS School Psychology Department supports MTSS implementation, contact ABSS Co-Lead School Psychologists:

Mike Thomas @ Michael_thomas@abss.k12.nc.us

Jacklyn Zins @ Jacklyn.zins@abss.k12.nc.us



MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

NC Department of Public Instruction

NC MTSS Guidance

In December, the MTSS Team released a guidance document for districts, charters and state operated programs in the form of a LiveBinder. The purpose of this document is to explicitly outline processes, practices and resources necessary to establish a Multi-Tiered System of Support (NC MTSS). This document is a companion to the blended professional development (PD) created and delivered by the Division of Integrated Academic and Behavior Systems.

Information in the LiveBinder can greatly assist school psychologists in understanding MTSS as a school improvement framework so that they can best support it. Here's a start:

- Did you know that MTSS is not just about a three-tiered model of instruction and intervention? Dig deeper and understand the [6 Critical Components](#) of MTSS implementation.
- What does an assessment system look like within an MTSS? Read the [Comprehensive Student Assessment Guidelines in an MTSS](#) and find out!

The information in the MTSS Guidance LiveBinder will assist school psychologists as they communicate with school staff and stakeholders to ensure understanding of MTSS as a framework that exists for ALL students.

Stay connected & learn more:

Join the [MTSS Listserve](#)

Follow us on Twitter @[ncmtss](#)

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ncmtss>

General Information:

SLD “Quick Start” Implementation Guide Released

Initial guidance for the implementation of policy, effective July 1, 2020, for the evaluation and identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities, has been added to the NCDPI MTSS LiveBinder. The direct link to the SLD guidance within this LiveBinder is located [here](#). The complete NC MTSS LiveBinder can be accessed [here](#). This resource will be supported by a more extensive SLD Implementation Guide, which will be released as the professional learning offered through the MTSS Module 3 training commences. Also, as we approach 2020, there will additional platforms through which professional learning and guidance on the SLD policy changes will be offered to school professionals.

Did You Know?

National Specialized Instructional Support Personnel week is April 24-28!

The National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) represents over a million Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) nationwide. SISP professionals provide and support school-based prevention and intervention services to address barriers to educational success, ensure positive conditions for learning, and help all students achieve academically and ultimately become productive citizens. SISP work with teachers, administrators, and parents to ensure that all students are successful in school. NASISP seeks to empower SISP professionals by encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and affirming their role in education’s best practices and their involvement in school improvement efforts.

[Participate in the campaign](#)

Learn more by visiting the [National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel](#)

Conference Proposal Applications

[67th Conference on Exceptional Children](#)—Proposal Deadline is April 28th



CALL FOR PROPOSALS CLOSED ON APRIL 20TH
SAVE THE DATE FOR THE FALL CONFERENCE IN DURHAM
OCTOBER 22-24

Look for proposals for the Fall Conference!



[NCSA Fall Conference Call for Presenters on-line application](#) is open to receive proposals to present at fall conference, held November 8—10, 2017, in Greensboro. *Application deadline is May 22nd.*

School Psychology Communication Updates

ATTENTION

****UPDATED**** School Psychology Webpage

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/studentssupport/psychology/>

****NEW**** Like us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/NCDPISchoolPsychology/>

****COMING IN MAY**** Follow us on Twitter

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Check the **NC DPI Exceptional Children's Division Professional Learning Calendar** for upcoming trainings by clicking [here](#)

Southeastern School Behavioral Health Conference

April 27-28

Myrtle Beach, SC

Speakers and sessions to promote student academic and personal success by reducing barriers to learning and supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of youth and families. Click [here](#) for more information.

North Carolina Psychological Association

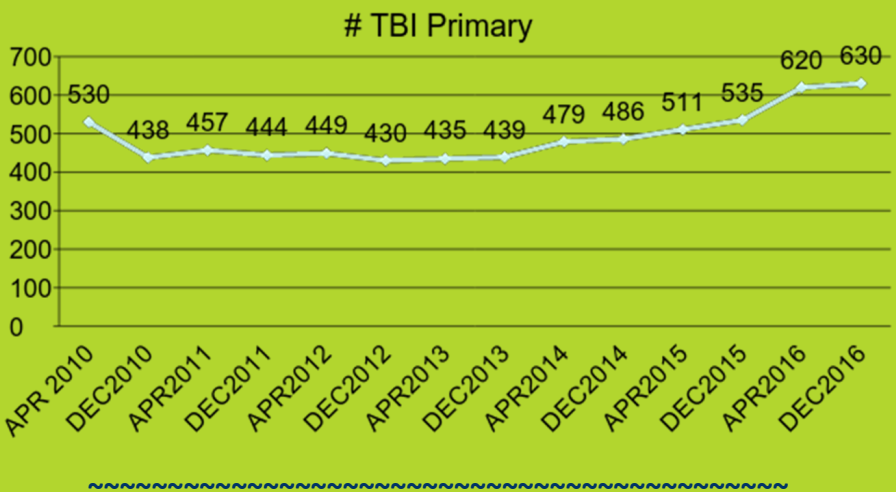
[Spring Workshops](#)

April 28-29

TBI APPROVED PROVIDERS' CORNER

Since the expansion of the TBI definition in NC Policies (October 2013), we continue to see the IDEA identification rates rise for TBI. As this upward trend continues, the need for quality evaluations will also grow.

TBI providers are encouraged to network with one another around challenging cases by developing a communication system with one another. One way to do this can be by setting up a regular "forum" of providers within your region. Information on how to set up a communication list within your region is available. If you need assistance getting started, email theTBIRegistry@cidd.unc.edu



mTBI/Concussion

As TBI trained school psychologists, a comprehensive service delivery model intended for all students will also support those who have sustained a mild TBI. Concussions are prevalent, and your expertise is needed.

- If your school or district is not aware of SBE policy, help to bring awareness to the Return-to-Learn Policy for students who sustain concussions.
- Support efforts at the district or school level to ensure that proper concussion management occurs in order to reduce the rate of reoccurring concussions. Recovery rates slow with each reoccurrence, and, often students with pre-existing neurodevelopmental conditions (SLD, ADHD, mental health disorders, ASD, etc.) have a slower rate of recovery.

Proper concussion management will improve rates of recovery and decrease the risk of reoccurring mTBIs

Visit the [DPI Concussion page](#) to learn more

RELEVANT RESOURCE LINKS:

[North Carolina School Psychology Association](#)

[North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards](#)

[National Association of School Psychologists](#)

[National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel](#) ***NEW***

[North Carolina State Board of Education](#)

[North Carolina Department of Public Instruction \(NCDPI\)](#)