



SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

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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.

Newly Elected State Superintendent

Through the November elections, Mr. Mark Johnson was elected State Superintendent within the NC Department of Public Instruction. As the end of 2016 drew near, NC DPI bid a fond farewell to Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson, who held this position for over 11 years. This farewell included a SBE Resolution honoring Dr. Atkinson. With the start of 2017, Mr. Johnson began his service in this position. On January 5th, 2017, Mr. Johnson delivered his first report to the State Board of Education as the newly elected State Superintendent.



STUDENT • SCHOOL • PARENT • COMMUNITY

It is the mission of this partnership to develop recommendations for policy and/or legislative change to ensure that public school students in North Carolina have equitable access to a full continuum of high-quality and well-coordinated mental health services.

UPDATE ON THE NC SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (NC SMHI):

- Members of this partnership presented a summary of their findings and recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) in November 2016.
- NC SMHI will return to the SBE in February with a school mental health policy proposal that is aligned with a Multi-Tiered System of Support and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model.
- More information is available by accessing the NC SMHI full report, executive summary, and recommendations.
- The proposed policy and discussion will be accessible through the SBE meeting information and the live audio stream on the respective dates of their monthly meetings.

*The School Psychology Newsletter is a quarterly publication.
Look for the Spring issue in April 2017.*

Standard 1: School Psychologists Demonstrate Leadership

School psychologists advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning.

Reflections on Standard 1:

Advocacy begins with leadership. Leadership begins with knowledge of the dynamics that exist within one's situation, and a resolve to effectively identify challenges and solutions in order to progress. School psychologists do this all the time when it comes to student learning at the individual level. Many also frequently exhibit these characteristics when identifying and addressing the needs of student groups. But what about ALL students? The bigger picture.

School psychologists are faced with many challenges as a result of being the most understaffed discipline of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) in NC. Additionally, school psychologists are often called upon to demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding of both federal and state regulations, as they apply to students with disabilities. School psychology's necessary role in the evaluation of students to assist teams in determining IDEA eligibility and effective instruction often overshadows involvement as a comprehensive service provider. The responsibilities and challenging caseloads leave very little time to advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning...ALL student learning.

In 2015, the NCSPA Professional Practices Committee developed a [position paper](#) which reflected on the "State of the State" with regard to school psychological service provision. This document, along with its companion [Executive Summary](#) and [Talking Points](#) documents were intended to provide practitioners, school leaders, local and state boards of education, as well as legislators the information that is needed to begin to address the critical shortages that face the discipline of school psychology, and, ultimately, affect student learning.

Knowledge does not always translate into action; however, effective action *begins* with adequate knowledge. It is critical for school psychologists to effectively convey the knowledge of our role and function, as defined not only in the NASP Practice Model, but also evident in the NC Professional School Psychology Standards and the School Psychologist Evaluation Process, which were approved and adopted by the State Board of Education in 2009 and 2013, respectively. School psychologists must be well equipped to convey this knowledge to others so that effective identification of challenges AND solutions can take place.

Knowledge that ALL school psychologists require:

- Knowledge of the [NASP Practice Model](#)
- Knowledge of the [NC Professional School Psychology Standards](#)
- Knowledge of the [NC School Psychologist Evaluation Process](#) and its linkage to the NASP Practice Model and the NC Professional School Psychology Standards
- Knowledge of LEA's average school psychologist to student ratio
- Knowledge of individual school psychologist to student ratio
- Knowledge of the funding sources for school psychologists positions within the LEA
- Knowledge of caseload (i.e., percentage of time spent on assessment-based activities/special education placement activities, vs. other activities)
- Knowledge of LEA needs related to provision of school psychological services (bullying data, office/discipline referrals, suspensions/expulsions, mental health resources available in the community, LEA IDEA data, school performance data, etc.)

Adequate knowledge in the above areas establishes the common language needed across the discipline in advocating for positive change in policies and practices that affect student learning. Practitioners across the state are encouraged to have this knowledge available in order to convey a clear and consistent message to stakeholders involved in improving outcomes for children.

If you have a story to share regarding how advocacy through leadership has resulted in improved school psychological service delivery for ALL students, we want to hear from you. See "Bright Spots" feature section for submission instructions.

NC Professional School Psychology Standards

Standard 1: School Psychologists Demonstrate Leadership

School psychologists demonstrate leadership by promoting and enhancing the overall academic mission by providing services that strengthen the student, school, home, and community partnerships and alleviate barriers to learning in the twenty-first century.

Spotlight on Special Education Leaders:

Over one hundred educators were recognized from across the state at the 66th Annual Conference on Exceptional Children in November 2016.

Four of these educators were school psychologists selected by their district



The **Exceptional Educator of Excellence** award recognizes leaders in service to the school system through innovative instructional programs and/or methodologies that demonstrate positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Their leadership, dedication, and service in extracurricular and nonacademic activities improve the quality of education for exceptional children and convey a positive reflection on the education profession.

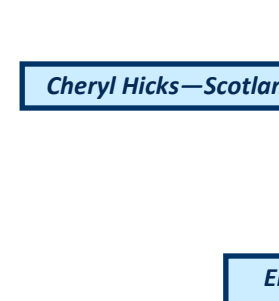
Congratulations to the Following Exemplars of Standard 1



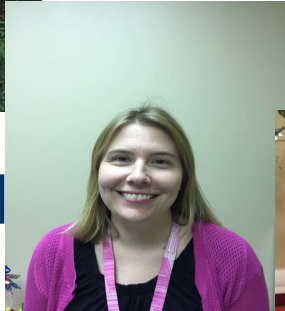
Susan Atkinson—Pender County Schools



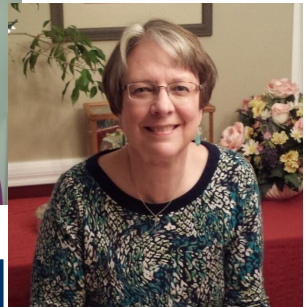
Charity Bumpass—Rockingham County Schools



Cheryl Hicks—Scotland County Schools



Elizabeth Pless—Rowan-Salisbury Schools



The following descriptors represent some of the information provided by district leaders in describing their nominees:

- *Natural leader who expands her leadership beyond the school level to conduct district wide trainings for staff*
- *Her diligence and willingness to support her colleagues reflect the high expectations she holds for herself and the students in our county*
- *Leadership and superior knowledge in her field*
- *Ability to strive during adversity*
- *Works directly with school administrators, student support staff and teachers to assist with problem solving and response during crisis situations*
- *Leads professional development sessions in order to train district staff members in strategies to meet the needs of populations of students*
- *Dedication, commitment, and excellence in serving exceptional children*

MTSS & SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY:

Many school psychologists have training in the development of tiered supports and implementation of an assessment system designed to frequently monitor student progress. Other school psychologists have been trained in a more traditional model of service delivery, which is highly tied to special education evaluation and other related activities, as defined within the IDEA.

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 Fall Newsletter was *general awareness* of MTSS implementation.

In this issue, in the areas of **Readiness** and **Communication**, we are excited to share a district spotlight from Rockingham County Schools. Check out the brief video clips below, which provide descriptions of how school psychologists participate in MTSS implementation, specifically around these two critical areas of initial implementation:

- [School Psychologist Readiness](#)
- [Psychologist MTSS Communication Plan](#)



MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

NC Department of Public Instruction

NC MTSS Guidance

During the month of 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.

Topics covered in the LiveBinder include:

- The MTSS Implementation Model Six Critical Components of MTSS
- Measuring Implementation of MTSS Establishing Readiness for Implementation
- Essential Elements of Core Instruction Analyzing Core Instruction
- Establishing Readiness to Build an Intervention System
- Developing an Adolescent Literacy Component to the System of Interventions

Additional information within the LiveBinder include guidelines for assessment within a comprehensive balanced system, determining effectiveness of intervention and data decision rules, to name a few. School psychologists are encouraged to enhance their MTSS knowledge by reviewing the material in the LiveBinder.

It is critical that school psychologists get involved as their respective districts/charter schools/state operated programs move forward in installing an MTSS.

Stay connected & learn more:

Join the [MTSS Listserve](#)

Follow us on Twitter [@ncmtss](#)

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

General Information:

- As we begin a new calendar year after a highly divisive election year, school psychologists are encouraged to stay up to date with decisions made at the national and state level that affect children and youth, and the field of education, in general.
 - Updates on NC's plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act can be found here.
 - NCSPA's monthly newsletter includes a Lobbyist's Loft. This section is a one-stop shop to stay on top of legislative decisions that impact our work. You must be a member of NCSPA in order to have access to the newsletter, so join today.
- NCSPA Professional Practices Committee (PPC) is working to update existing guidance documents and create new ones, based on feedback from the membership. These documents will provide positions and guidance based on Professional Standards of Practice and Ethical Guidelines. PPC has recently updated and published a document that offers guidance to practitioners on Communicating Special Education Evaluation Results and Recommendations. Look for more updates this year that address topics such as:
 - MTSS—Role Expansion for School Psychologists
 - Mental Health/Crisis Support in Schools
 - Assessment of English Learners
 - Responsible Assessment and Intervention Practices
- NC School Psychology 2016-2017 workforce data is in the collection process and will be published in the Spring issue of this newsletter.

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.

It is important to share these stories to allow all practitioners access to “bright spots” within our discipline in order that these practices can be studied and replicated. School Psychologists (departments and/or individuals) are invited to share their great work by submitting their stories/highlights/video clips from across the state.

Examples of work to highlight:

- Demonstrating leadership through effective advocacy for sufficient staffing of school psychologists
 - Establishing a continuum of school mental health supports at the district or school level
 - Working collaboratively to support effective installation of an MTSS
 - Working with local School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs) on important issues that impact the “whole child”
 - Collaborating with other Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISPs) to design/deliver social-emotional/behavioral interventions
 - Advocating for the needs of children with disabilities
- ...the list can go on an on!

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.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

North Carolina Council for Exceptional Children— 30th Annual Conference

January 18-20

Wilmington, NC

Click [here](#) for more information

National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) 2017 Annual Convention

February 21-24

San Antonio, Texas

(early registration ends on January 25th)

NCDPI Collaborative Conference for Student Achievement (CCSA)

March 20-22

Greensboro, NC

Speakers and sessions for teachers, student services personnel, school administrators, superintendents, parents, school board members, university and college faculty/staff/administrators, and community and business representatives with an interest in innovative practices to improve educational outcomes for students. Click [here](#) for more information.

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

The Friday Center – Chapel Hill, NC

TBI APPROVED PROVIDERS' CORNER:

Regional Professional Learning Opportunities

The NC DPI Exceptional Children Division will sponsor 4 regional sessions during the months of March/April for ALL TBI Approved Providers.

These professional learning sessions have been established to strengthen the level of support and structure that exists within the TBI Approved Provider network of practitioners in NC.

Dates and regional locations are listed below:

Date:	Regional Location:
March 2nd	North Central/Northeast
March 29th	Southeast/Sandhills
April 26th	Piedmont Triad/Southwest
April 27th	Northwest/Western

Topics to be covered will include: concussion monitoring, designing TBI evaluation plans, and state level plan to support effective practice. This will also provide the first structured opportunity for TBI Approved Providers to network with others within their respective regions.

Look for the memo and registration information in late January!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[North Carolina School Psychology Association](#)

[North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards](#)

[National Association of School Psychologists](#)

[North Carolina State Board of Education](#)

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