

**Standards of Practice for
New Brunswick
School Psychologists**

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Preamble

The *Standards of Practice for New Brunswick: School Psychologists* provides an overall framework for the practice of school psychology in New Brunswick, Canada. The primary reason for having standards is to promote, guide, and direct school psychology. Standards set out the professional basis for school psychology practice: describing the desirable and achievable level of performance expected, against which actual performance can be measured. Standards also serve as a guide to the professional knowledge, skill, and judgment needed. It is expected that all school psychologists will meet the expectations of these professional standards and be able to articulate how they demonstrate the standards in their practice.

The *Standards of Practice for New Brunswick: School Psychologists* is intended to provide guidance to school psychologists, schools and school districts on the roles of school psychologists and their expected competencies, the development of related policy and procedures, and the delivery of school psychology services within the collaborative program planning process. The principles of inclusive education and respect for diversity provide the framework within which the roles and responsibilities of the school psychologist are delivered.

The New Brunswick definition of Inclusive Education (2009) highlights three complementary principles that directly influence professional practice:

1. Public education is universal: the provincial curriculum is provided equitably to all students in an inclusive, common learning environment shared among age-appropriate, neighbourhood peers;
2. Public education is individualized - the success of each student depends on the degree to which education is based on the student's best interests and responds to his or her strengths and needs; and
3. Public education is flexible and responsive to change.

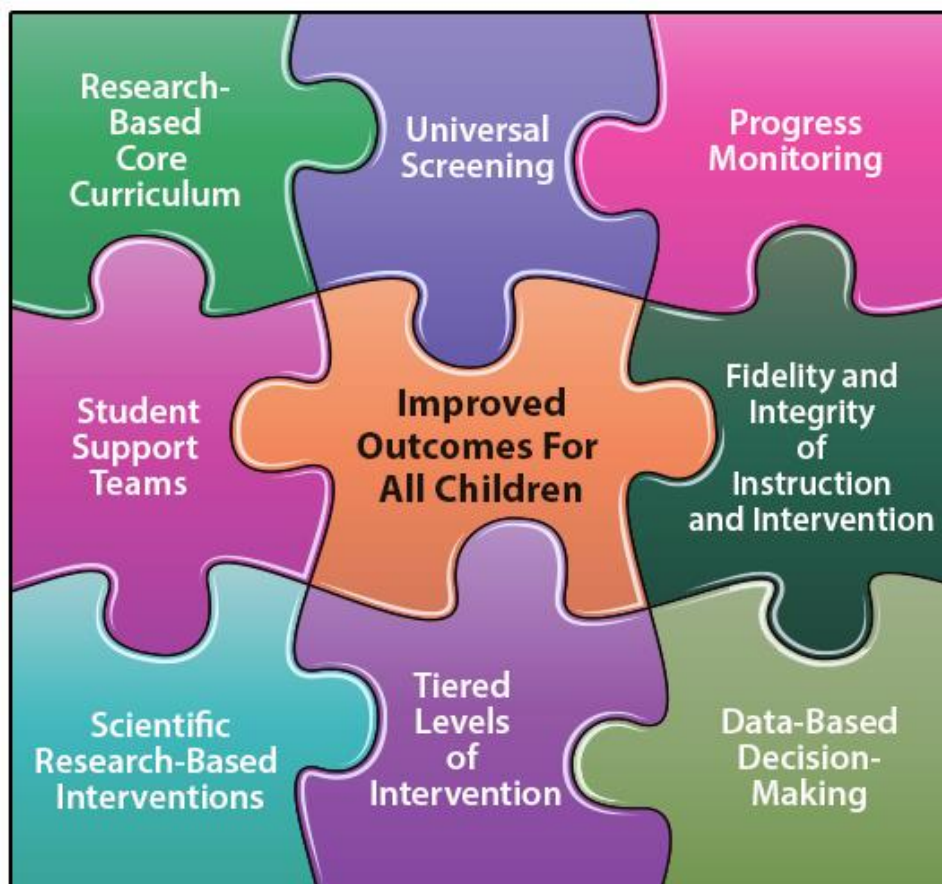
The *Education Act* outlines the roles and primary responsibilities of school districts, teachers, students, administrators, and parents/guardians concerning the education of all students, including those with diverse needs. School psychologists operate under the legal framework of this Act, including the regulations, ministerial directives, and all related policies enacted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and school districts. It is the responsibility of school psychologists working in New Brunswick schools to adhere to all such legal parameters of their employment with the school districts.

The *Standards of Practice for New Brunswick: School Psychologists* document describes in broad terms the professional expectations of school psychologists including five broad standards statements, a description of each statement and indicators that illustrate how the standard may be demonstrated. Levels of education, experience, skill and proficiency with respect to the standards and indicators vary among individual school psychologists. It is important to note that school psychology is a dynamic and continuously developing profession. As such, standards listed within do not exclude emerging areas of practice.

Response to Intervention

The New Brunswick framework for support and intervention is the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Response to Intervention (RTI) is the model for student support and intervention in New Brunswick schools. The model is aimed at improving the educational outcomes of all students through monitoring individual progress and using data to inform decisions about instructional needs. Response to intervention is a framework that is both prevention and intervention focused. Using the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, the Education Support Services (ESS) teams in collaboration with other educators and service providers can provide supports for prevention and intervention for all students, not just those requiring a personalized learning plan. Multi-tiered preventive programs, problem solving, and early intervention, “can serve as the glue that unites the student with his or her environment” (Montgomery, 2005).

The goal of the New Brunswick RTI model is improved outcomes for ALL students within an inclusive learning environment!



Response to Intervention (RTI) is a model for providing high quality instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students. Response to Intervention is generally depicted as a three tier model which includes academic as well as behavioural instruction and interventions. RTI is a flexible framework and allows for student movement between tiers. Progress is monitored closely and decisions about instructional needs are based on data collected from on-going

formative assessment.

Tier 1

All students receive Tier 1 instruction and interventions, also known as evidence-informed practices. Tier 1 begins with a comprehensive curriculum that is delivered with high quality instruction. It provides evidence-informed classroom instructional practices that enable 80-85 percent of students to be successful without further intervention. Tier 1 instruction and interventions are universal and available to all students as part of the common learning environment.

Tier 2

Tier 2 provides interventions of moderate intensity and duration that supplement, enhance and support Tier 1 strategies, and are provided for small groups of students. Students receive the same instruction as students in Tier 1 as well as targeted interventions that are provided by the classroom teacher, and/or when necessary, Education Support Services (ESS) staff. About 5-10 percent of students may need support at this level.

Tier 3

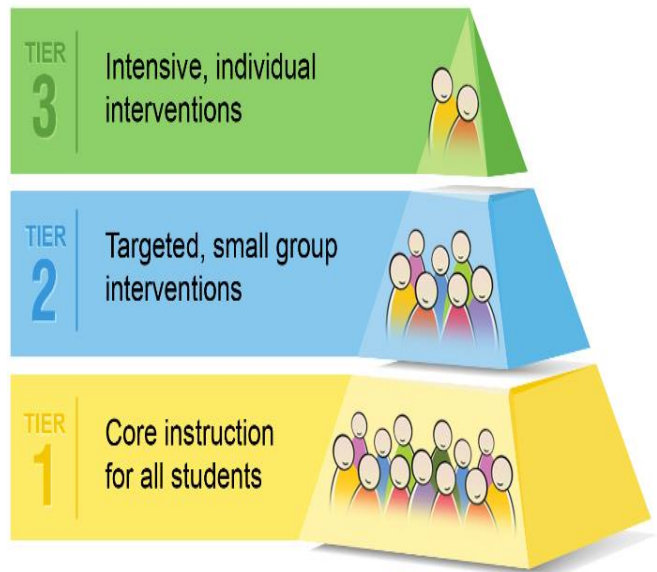
Tier 3 provides intense interventions for groups of one to three students. Only 1-5 percent of students generally need support at this level. Like Tier 2, this level is also a supplement to Tier 1, not a replacement. Tier 3 is specifically designed and personalized small group and/or individualized instruction that is typically extended beyond the time and intensity allocated for Tier 1 and Tier 2. It is possible that some students may go from receiving Tier 1 to Tier 3 interventions and not receive Tier 2 support. It is a step up, step down fluid process.

The goal of school psychologists within RTI is to effect change at the organizational level (EECD, district, school, program and class) and individual level to support student outcomes. To work within the RTI framework with school-aged children in New Brunswick, school psychologists must have a working knowledge of:

- Response to Intervention
- consultation and collaboration;
- development of presentations for professional learning ;
- assessment (including screening);
- individual and group intervention.

Further detail on how RTI works within a New Brunswick context and how this approach governs support structures for students can be found in the *School-Based Educational Support Services Teams to Support Inclusive Education* document.

Pyramid of Interventions



Introduction to School Psychologists

“School psychologists are an integral part of collaborative problem solving teams within their districts. They bring to the team their scientist-scholar-practitioner training, which emphasizes the need for evidence-based decision making by identification of a problem. Gathering data to identify and quantify a concern enables the school team to formulate and put in place appropriate plans, and provides the basis for subsequent progress monitoring which becomes a part of the solution. School psychologists have graduate level training in the assessment and diagnosis of a wide range of cognitive, learning, and mental health difficulties. Accordingly, school psychologists must choose, administer and interpret a wide range of tests and assessment techniques with increasing sophistication and relevance. This information enables school psychologists to provide and interpret the data needed to diagnose and/or formulate a student’s profile of strengths and needs and, in turn, to help school teams design effective, evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring strategies.

Although psychological assessment and diagnosis are unique and essential functions that only the school psychologist can provide, these activities should not, and cannot be the only roles of the school psychologist that are utilized by a progressive school district concerned with ensuring the social-emotional health of its students. In order to utilize fully the range of skills the school psychologist offers to the educational community, equal emphasis must be placed on all five levels of service delivery that the psychologist is able to provide, as detailed below.” (School Psychology: An Essential Public Service. CPA Educational and School Psychology Section, 2014).

The standards for school psychologists are designed to clarify the services provided by school psychologists in the RTI framework in Anglophone School Districts within the province of New Brunswick and to create consistency of those services between all school districts. The specific goals of the standards are to:

- identify the critical role the school psychologist contributes to the educational community within an inclusive and response to intervention (RTI) service delivery framework;
- establish standards for school psychologists as an area of expertise within the school psychologists scope of practice;
- define the training requirements and ethical obligations of school psychologists
- ensure consistent school psychology services within and between school districts
- ensure the quality of school psychology services within Anglophone schools in New Brunswick;
- ensure accountability of school psychology services for employers, students and families and other professionals;
- create a benchmark for evaluation of school psychology practice and continuous quality improvement in individual and systemic school psychology services;
- provide school districts and school administration with the knowledge to support role clarification, practice, continuing education and professional development needs of school psychologists;

- encourage the participation of school psychologists in the development of school and district programming and consultation for curriculum related areas; and,
- advocate for the participation of school psychologists in the development and refinement of school, district, and public policy.

The expertise of school psychologists in these varied areas is an important component of educational programming for many New Brunswick students to support excellence and equity.

Purpose of Standards

School psychology is an essential public service. At a time when there is a nationally recognized urgent focus on the social and emotional mental health of children and youth (MHCC, 2010), the provision of universally accessible, quality psychological services is of tantamount importance. Statistics indicate that 20% of the population will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime, and of those, only 40% will be able to access psychological services. Of particular importance, it is noted that 80% of those who will experience mental health problems as adults will have developed those conditions before the age of 18 (Flett and Hewitt, 2013). These data point to the critical role that schools can play in prevention and early intervention of mental health issues in society, given that schools are the only universally mandated public service for all students up to the age of 18. Providing quality psychological services in schools is arguably the most efficient and effective way to improve the mental health of society.

Brief Description of the Standards Format

The standards are stated as outcomes and framed within five (5) areas of school psychology:

- I. Organizational development and system level consultation
- II. Direct Practice
- III. Workload and service management
- IV. Professional learning
- V. Research

In each area of school psychology practice, primary objectives are provided with a brief description of the area of practice. This is followed by outcome standards and indicators of minimum expected school psychologist outcomes. The emphasis on outcomes underscores the importance of school psychologists evaluating the impact and effectiveness of their practices in promoting students' learning potential. It should be noted that the five areas of practice are not discrete and that school psychologists will need to utilize skills and knowledge in more than one area to address student(s) and/or system needs.

Standards of Practice for School Psychology

These standards, and indicators of their achievement by the school psychologist, provide performance indicators for school psychologists, their supervisors, and their district employers. In each area of school psychology practice, primary objectives are provided with a brief description of the area of practice. This is followed by outcome standards and indicators of minimum expected school psychology outcomes. The emphasis on outcomes underscores the importance of school psychologists evaluating the impact and effectiveness of their practices in promoting students' learning potential.

The indicators used in this document are not a complete list. The five standards are inter-related; an indicator used to illustrate one standard may also demonstrate the application of other standards. How a school psychologist demonstrates a standard is influenced by the school psychologist's level of competence, role, setting and the situation.

Standards

I. System level consultation and intervention

Objectives:

School psychologists work with district and school education support services teams, which may include collaboration, coaching, problem solving, screening, and group instruction, to provide expertise in learning, developmental and social/emotional issues from an evidence-based approach.

The outcomes of school psychology involvement at the organizational systems level are:

- Preventative and proactive supports for all students in the classroom/common learning environment
- Support and guidance to school and district staff to enhance the school functioning and environment

Standard 1.1

The school psychologist supports the district to improve the delivery of services in meeting students' social-emotional, behavioural and academic needs.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist understands the integral and unique role that the psychologist plays in district wide support.

- ✓ The school psychologist understands the components of effective schools and introduces these concepts to district staff as part of district-wide planning.
- ✓ The school psychologist identifies and assists in implementing and analyzing data from district-wide screening assessments, and is able to formulate recommendations from these data employing evidence-based programs and practices.
- ✓ The school psychologist ensures that the district is involved in community and interagency networking and liaisons with stakeholders.
- ✓ The school psychologist participates on district and/or community committees and partnerships (i.e. Suicide Prevention Committee, Youth Treatment Program, District Health Advisory Committee, etc.).

Standard 1.2

The school psychologist supports school personnel to improve the delivery of services in meeting students' social-emotional, behavioural and academic needs.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist employs the collaborative consultation model effectively with school teams, parents, district administration, and community stakeholders.
- ✓ The school psychologist is attuned to the needs of educational staff in a school and can participate in discussions with school-based ESS Teams and help to identify services or programs which might be introduced to enhance school improvement plans.
- ✓ The school psychologist understands the teacher's role in the classroom and coaches when requested/needed to facilitate classroom functioning.
- ✓ The school psychologist delivers in-service education for school and district staff, and for parents, to introduce new research-based concepts or to teach/reinforce skills.
- ✓ The school psychologist is aware of universal screening measures for student social/emotional health, and, after consultation with educational staff, employs them in schools as a prevention measure.
- ✓ The school psychologist introduces and supports positive school-wide learning and behavioural measures and programs to enhance the student and staff mental health (e.g., PBIS).

- ✓ The school psychologist participates in the school ESS Team, and provides consultation to the group on school, classroom, and individual student concerns.
- ✓ The school psychologist is trained in crisis response, and responds to school staff, students and parents following any traumatic incidents affecting the school population. The school psychologist continues to monitor the progress of the school staff, students and parents after a crisis intervention and provides follow-up where needed.

II. Standards for Direct Practice

Objectives:

Direct practice by school psychologists in the educational system results in prevention, early identification and intervention for students with learning, social-emotional, and behavioural problems.

The outcomes of direct school psychology intervention are:

- Improved/enhanced student learning, behaviour and social-emotional development
- Facilitated delivery of, or access to, appropriate required services, when needed

Standard 2.1

The school psychologist works with educational staff and others, as appropriate, in student-focused consultation with an aim towards planning academic and/or behavioural interventions for students and/or classroom groupings experiencing challenges.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist understands curriculum, learning processes, student behaviour, social/emotional functioning and classroom practices so that they are able to develop and monitor meaningful programs for individual students.
- ✓ The school psychologist participates in a coaching/teaching partnership (i.e., classroom teachers, Education Support Teacher - Resource, Education Support Teacher – Guidance).
- ✓ The school psychologist has expertise in child development and behaviour issues, and employs and assists teachers in the delivery of evidence-based practices to enhance appropriate growth and development of particular students in need.
- ✓ The school psychologist participates in problem-solving meetings prior to the school's submission of a request for individual services.

- ✓ The school psychologist observes students in the school environment in order to help identify appropriate intervention strategies, to identify barriers to intervention, and to monitor the student's progress.
- ✓ The school psychologist works collaboratively with parents and teachers regarding concerns and intervention strategies for students with behaviour, social-emotional, and learning difficulties.
- ✓ The school psychologist provides consultation to educational staff related to an individual student's behaviour and/or learning style or difficulties.
- ✓ The school psychologist identifies community agencies and service providers that may be able to provide supports for a particular student and works in collaboration with them.

Standard 2.2

The school psychologist works directly with the student or targeted student groups, parents and teachers to better understand academic, behavioural and social-emotional challenges the student or student may be experiencing and to develop/implement/evaluate evidence-based programs to address the identified problem area.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist obtains informed parental consent prior to any direct work with a student, as well as consent to confer with other professionals outside of the school system who might be able to provide collateral information relevant to a comprehensive assessment of the student's needs.
- ✓ The school psychologist is familiar with, and administers, a wide variety of formal and informal assessment measures to provide an objective picture of the student's learning, behavioural, and social-emotional needs.
- ✓ While the main purpose of a psychological assessment is to inform practice based on a student's unique profile of strengths and challenges, the school psychologist will provide a diagnosis if a student's profile meets diagnostic criterion.
- ✓ The school psychologist completes a psychological and/or behavioural assessment to gain a better understanding of the student's strengths and needs to guide and develop programming.
- ✓ The school psychologist completes a comprehensive risk/needs assessment following the determination of a Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) by the school and community team, and assists with the development of an appropriate intervention plan.

- ✓ The school psychologist writes effective, user-friendly reports of assessment results which are useful to the parents and teachers.
- ✓ The school psychologist effectively communicates consultation recommendations, the process of assessment, and assessment results to teachers and parents. While keeping in mind the best interest of the student, written recommendations are developed in collaboration with the school team to ensure that they are appropriate and feasible in the school environment.
- ✓ The school psychologist has knowledge of, and recommends, in consultation with teachers and parents, evidence-based counselling and social/emotional skills programs and activities according to student-specific needs which can be employed independently or in cooperation with teachers within classrooms, with small groups, or with individual students.
- ✓ Following a psychological or behavioural assessment, the school psychologist participates in program planning meetings and case reviews for individual students with educational staff and parents and provides advice on how to adapt the curriculum and make accommodations to meet a student's learning, behaviour and social-emotional strengths and needs.
- ✓ The school psychologist coaches, through demonstration and training, progress monitoring strategies as part of the individual intervention plan, and assists staff in collecting and interpreting data as part of the on-going decision-making process.
- ✓ The school psychologist makes referrals to, collaborates and coordinates with other agencies to provide comprehensive services and wrap-around support for the student.
- ✓ The school psychologist provides counselling and/or skills teaching to individual students.

III. Standards of Service/Workload Management

Objectives:

Effective service/workload management ensures that the district, schools and parents are able to access professional psychological services in a timely and efficient manner.

Outcomes: Working conditions and effective service/workload management by school psychologists will result in:

- Appropriate ratio of school psychologists to students
- Timely service delivery and response to schools at all three tiers of RTI
- Properly administered interventions and assessments

- Confidential client contact and assessment report storage

Standard 3.1.

The school psychologist, as an integral part of the educational community, is visible and available to provide expertise within the Response to Intervention model of problem-solving and service delivery.

Indicators:

- ✓ School psychologists will receive appropriate administrative supervision within the district.
- ✓ Residents in psychology will receive professional supervision by a psychologist, as required by CPNB.
- ✓ Psychometrists II will receive professional supervision by a psychologist.
- ✓ Time will be allotted for professional collaboration and support for school psychologists within the district and provincially, when opportunities arise.
- ✓ School psychologists will strive to balance their workloads such that 40% of their time is allotted to Tier 1 activities, 20% to Tier 2 activities, and 40% to Tier 3 activities.
- ✓ The district will actively work to fill vacant school psychology positions in order to attempt to meet the goal of maintaining a ratio of 1 psychologist to 1000 students, as recommended in provincial documents, to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of service deliverers for the student population.
- ✓ Vacancies in school psychology positions will be advertised promptly in order to ensure that the appropriate student: psychologist ratio can be maintained.

Standard 3.2.

The school psychologist adheres to the ethical principles and practices required by the Code of Ethics for Psychologists. In doing so, the school psychologist uses and safeguards assessment materials appropriately and respects the confidentiality of clients.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist reviews and co-signs reports written by Psychology Interns, and Residents in Psychology administering psychological tests to ensure accuracy of test interpretation and recommendations.
- ✓ The school psychologist reviews reports written by a Psychometrists II administering psychological tests to ensure accuracy of test interpretation and recommendations.
- ✓ The school psychologist maintains confidential files for psychological/psycho-educational protocols and reports, and ensures that access to these reports is allowed to only those qualified to share them.
- ✓ The school psychologist will have a private office to ensure confidential telephone and personal contact with clients.
- ✓ The school psychologist follows provincial conflict of interest guidelines if engaged in private practice. (see Appendix F).

IV. Professional Learning**Objectives:**

School psychologists develop personal professional development plans on an annual basis and strive for professional growth throughout their careers.

Outcomes:

- Currently endorsed approaches in school psychology are evident in the district.
- Students, teachers/administrators, and parents receive appropriate services as determined by best practices and individualized assessment of needs.

Standard 4.1.

The school psychologist adheres to the principles of life-long learning and constantly strives to improve their knowledge base and update their professional practices.

- ✓ The school psychologist participates in annual performance reviews with a supervisor and updates their professional growth plan accordingly.
- ✓ The school psychologist takes responsibility for their own professional advancement by accessing relevant journals, websites, and professional memberships, peer consultations, and discussion groups which focus on current developments in evidence-based school psychology practices **Examples include:** reading professional journals and other professionally relevant publications, attending lectures, taking courworkshop (in person or online), and actively participating in peer consultation/group supervision.
- ✓ The school psychologist lobbies for, and receives, opportunities for professional development within the district and province, as well as, when financially feasible, out of province.

Standard 4.2.

The school psychologist promotes the profession and enhances access to psychological services within the district.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist provides supervision of practicum students/interns when the opportunity presents itself.
- ✓ The school psychologist provides supervision of Residents in Psychology as the opportunity presents itself.

Standard 4.3.

The school psychologist is diligent in sharing of current evidence-informed research and best practices with educational staff and parents.

Indicators:

- ✓ The school psychologist shares information with district/school staff and with parents when requested.
- ✓ The school psychologist provides district-wide and school-based professional development and training.
- ✓ The school psychologist promotes, trains and supports educational staff on school-wide RTI and Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS).
- ✓ The school psychologist supports and partners with educational staff in the selection and/or delivery of social-emotional learning (mental fitness) and academic programs.

V. Research

Objectives:

School psychologists ensure that current knowledge of research and evidence-based interventions are part of the district's/school's professional development plan and practices.

Outcomes:

- District practices and staff awareness of current evidence-based practices in education are up-to-date and dynamic.
- The district/school is able to measure progress and the effectiveness of interventions using appropriate research techniques.

Standard 5.1.

The school psychologist maintains a high level of current knowledge of research methods, as well as evidence-based practices and outcomes in education and brings these skills in research to the forefront when the opportunity arises.

Indicators:

- ✓ Within a scientist-scholar-practitioner model of education, the school psychologist stays current with research in education and child development issues.
- ✓ The school psychologist collaborates in the research, design and/or delivery of evidence-informed programs and supports: for example, anxiety, anger management, stress management, mindfulness, addictions, social skills programs, anti-bullying initiatives, the development of threat assessment protocols, and crisis response plans.

Service Delivery for School Psychologists in New Brunswick

School psychologists in New Brunswick also follow the levels of service delivery described in *Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists in New Brunswick (2001)* (Appendix A), later adopted by the Canadian Psychological Association and re-released as *Professional Practice Guidelines for School Psychologists in Canada* (CPA, 2007). This model describes 5 levels of service delivery:

- **Indirect Intervention** – The school psychologist works with educational staff and others, as appropriate, in student-focused consultation with an aim towards planning academic and/or behavioural interventions for students and/or classroom groupings experiencing challenges. *Consent is not required for this level of service. However, it is strongly encouraged that school teams inform the parents/guardians of the school psychologist's involvement.*
- **Direct Intervention** – The school psychologist conducts formal assessments and/or intervenes directly (face to face) with a student or a group of students to address academic, behavioural and social-emotional challenges. *Consent is required for this level of service.*
- **Class-wide or School-wide Intervention** – The school psychologist works with educational staff to improve the delivery of services in meeting students' social-emotional, behavioural and academic needs. *Consent is not required for this level of service.*
- **District/System-wide Intervention** – The school psychologist works to improve the system as a whole in its effectiveness in dealing with students' social-emotional, behavioural and academic difficulties.
- **Dissemination of and Engaging in Current Research/ Professional Responsibility** – The school psychologist is diligent in reviewing and sharing of current evidence-informed research and best practices with educational staff and parents.

Within each of these domains, continuing professional training and ethical responsibility are essential.

School psychologists in New Brunswick constantly strive to balance their workloads among a focus on primary prevention programs, systemic interventions, individual consultations, post-intervention, and treatment for chronic and severe developmental problems. The breadth of practice speaks to the diversity of skills that the school psychologist brings to the educational system. As members of the school community, school psychologists play a critical role by virtue of their regular consultation and continuity of service that they provide, often as part of a multidisciplinary team.

As employees of the school district, school psychologists have, as their primary client, the school district and its employees. School psychologists employ a collaborative consultation model of service delivery. With a student-focused lens, they work collaboratively with all those

involved to improve the social/emotional and learning abilities and environment of the students and staff in the district.

Acknowledging this role, school districts and administrators need to be cognizant of practices and mechanisms that allow school psychologists to perform their duties to the maximum degree possible.

Standards of Training, Licensing Requirements and Ethical Obligations for School Psychologists in New Brunswick

School Psychologists in New Brunswick are educated at the graduate level, either at the Masters or Doctoral level, in a program of School Psychology, Educational Psychology, or Clinical Psychology. In each case, practica and internships are required as a part of the educational experience prior to graduation. Graduate schools ensure that their programs train students in the Core Competencies for Psychologists identified in the *Mutual Recognition Agreement*, which was adopted by all the Regulatory Bodies for Psychologists in Canada in response to the Agreement on Internal Trade in 2004.

Those competencies are:

- 1. Interpersonal Relations** - Psychologists establish and maintain a constructive working alliance with their clients, and are sensitive to the needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- 2. Assessment and Evaluation** - A psychologist draws on diverse methods of evaluation, determining which methods are best suited to the task at hand.
- 3. Intervention and Consultation** - A psychologist engages in activities that promote, restore and/or enhance positive functioning and a sense of well-being in clients through preventative, developmental and/or remedial services.
- 4. Ethics and Standards** - Psychologists accept their obligations, are sensitive to others and conduct themselves in an ethical manner.
- 5. Research** - The psychologist has the skills necessary to conduct and evaluate scientific research.

Following graduation, candidates are required to complete a period of interim membership (as a “Resident in Psychology”) with the College of Psychologists of New Brunswick (CPNB), the regulatory oversight body for professional psychologists in New Brunswick. During the residency period, the interim members’ work experience is supervised and reported on by a practicing and licensed/certified/registered psychologist. At the end of the supervisory period, which can be as long as 3 years, the candidate presents himself/herself for oral and written examinations prior to being granted licensed status.

As members of the CPNB, school psychologists adhere to the *Code of Ethics for Psychologists* of the Canadian Psychological Association which has been adopted by the College of Psychologists of New Brunswick. Accordingly, they respect four core principles:

- Respect for the Dignity of Persons;
- Responsible Caring;
- Integrity in Relationships; and
- Responsibility to Society.

The CPNB, as a regulatory body, ensures adherence of its members to the code of ethics. Perceived violations of the code of ethics are addressed by a formal complaints process administered by the CPNB. It must be noted that professional codes of ethics supersede any employer or client requests that, although unlikely, might be in conflict with the principles of the

code. If a conflict does arise, the psychologist will take steps to make the employer aware of conflict and attempt to rectify the situation.

Professional Issues for School Psychologists

In order for the school psychologist to fulfill the expectations of the district in their adherence to these standards to the best of their ability, there are certain considerations:

a) Appropriate Ratio of School Psychologists to Students

In order to ensure that school psychologists are able to perform all the functions expected of them by a school district in a timely and responsible fashion, an appropriate ratio of school psychologists to students is encouraged.

“Generally, the ratio should not exceed one school psychologist for every 1000 students. When school psychologists are providing comprehensive and preventive services (i.e., evaluations, consultation, individual/group counseling, crisis response, behavioral interventions, etc.), this ratio should not exceed one school psychologist for every 500 to 700 students in order to ensure quality of student outcomes. Similarly, when school psychologists are assigned to work primarily with student populations that have particularly intensive special needs (e.g., students with significant emotional or behavioral disorders, or students with autism spectrum disorders), this school psychologist to student ratio should be even lower.” Model of Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (NASP, 2010).

As recommended in the McKay Report and the Porter-Aucoin reports, efforts will be made to maintain a minimum of a 1:1000 ratio of school psychologists to students in every district in New Brunswick.

b) Appropriate Supervision in the Workplace

Those working in the public sector typically experience two types of supervision: administrative supervision and professional supervision. Administrative supervision can be provided by individuals other than those in the same profession, and ensures adherence to agency mandates. However, professional supervision must be provided by someone of the same profession to ensure fidelity to the standards of the profession.

Within school districts, candidates for licensing by CPNB (“Psychometrist III” or “Resident in Psychology”) are required to receive professional supervision by a licensed psychologist according to the schedule set out by the CPNB (Appendix C: Guidelines for Licensing of CPNB). All those using the term “school psychologist” must be licensed under the CPNB Act. It is important to note that only licensed psychologists are able to use the terms “psychological”, “psychologist”, or “psychology” (CPNB Act, 10(1)(a) and (b).

As licensed psychologists, school psychologists are able to practice without professional supervision. However, it is important, as well, that licensed school psychologists, if not receiving administrative supervision by a psychologist in the district, at least have access to collaborative dialogue with other licensed school psychologists who understand their roles and share their professional and ethical Code of Conduct. School districts must support structures that allow school psychologists to practice with professional autonomy.

c) Workload distribution

Applying the three tiered model of PBIS and RTI, the school psychologist needs to allocate their time in such a way as to meet the expectations of each tier most appropriately. Accordingly, it is recommended that 40% of a school psychologist's time be devoted to Tier 1 prevention/proactive activities, while 20% be devoted to Tier 2 (teacher/team support, informal assessment, RTI initial programming, and progress monitoring) and 40% to Tier 3 activities, including supporting students with significant challenging behaviour and mental health issues, individual assessment, Violent Threat-Risk Assessment (VTRA), and Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development.

d) Recruiting, Supply and Demand Issues

School psychologists have limited opportunities for graduate education in Canada, and even fewer options for internships. As a result, it is important that Human Resources officers be aware of how to advertise position openings, and direct them to the appropriate sources, to maximize the likelihood of successful recruiting. The EECD will maintain a list of graduate schools, as well as other vehicles for advertising, and a sample ad will be made available, as well (Appendices D and E).

When applications for positions are received by a district, they will be vetted by school district administration, with the assistance of a school psychologist, to ensure that the candidate has the appropriate qualifications to fill the position, and if not immediately, to assess what steps would need to be taken by the applicant (e.g.; application to the CPNB for interim status or MRA licensing, if already licensed in another province), as well as the amount of time which would be required to ensure licensing (e.g., supervision hours). The school psychologist will be the one most knowledgeable about these requirements and will also be the one to guide the applicant through the process. It is recommended that a school psychologist participate as a member of the interview team. Please note that this may be considered as an appropriate administrative duty for School Psychologist II.

If the successful candidate requires supervision for licensing, the assignment of the candidate to a psychologist supervisor within the district school psychology staff will be the decision of the district administration in consultation with school psychology staff. In most cases, the supervision will be a shared effort of the school psychologists on staff to maximize exposure of the candidate to different perspectives, and to minimize the demands on the time of a single school psychologist.

In New Brunswick, there are two classifications of School Psychologist; i.e., School Psychologist I and School Psychologist II (see job descriptions in *Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists in New Brunswick*, Appendix A). It is recommended that each district have a "School Psychologist II" in each education center. This will involve, in collaboration with district administrators the planning, organization, and evaluation of psychological services within the education centre.

e) Psychological/Psycho-Educational Reports, Storage, Access, Sharing

One of the functions of a school psychologist is to perform a variety of ability, learning, personality, behavioural, and other types of assessments. Such assessments normally are documented by written reports.

Psychological/psycho-educational reports created by a school psychologist are written with the client (i.e., the school district staff on behalf of the child) in mind and are intended to provide the student, the student's instructional team, and the student's parents or legal guardians with an accurate description of the student's strengths and challenges relating to school performance. These reports are intended to be written in language that is easily understood by adult readers and free of jargon or unrealistic recommendations, while still reflecting accurately the information collected in the assessment process. School psychological reports must support the development of plans and programs to assist students' learning and functioning.

Although a copy of a formal psychological/psycho-educational report written by a school psychologist might be placed in a student's confidential learning resource file or a student record folder, it can only be released to a third party outside of the school district with parent/legal guardian consent (or student, if 16 years of age or older and able to consent) by the school psychologists on staff. As well, psychological/psycho-educational reports in the student's file should be protected so as not to be available to anyone who might have access to the school or district files, although they should be available to the student's classroom teacher, if requested, with school psychologist consultation available.

Test protocols form part of the student's file, however test protocols are legally protected by the test developers, and, as such, are not available to anyone other than the school psychologist who administered the test. An exception is the sharing of completed protocols between psychologists for communication of results with the goal of planning interventions and services. Test protocols are, therefore, stored in a securely locked place, accessible only to the school psychologists on staff.

Findings from a psychological/psycho-educational report must never be shared with teachers or presented at case conferences by anyone other than the psychologist who wrote the report, or if unavailable, the school psychologist currently assigned to that school. The exception to this situation might be if a psychological/psycho-educational report comes from another district as part of the student file when a student moves. The school psychologist in the receiving district should be asked to interpret the report for the new staff to ensure the student's needs are met. In many cases, this will involve the school psychologist contacting the original school psychologist to discuss the report and ensure clarity of understanding.

In New Brunswick, psychological files are stored within the districts up to two years after the student's graduation date, and thereafter according to provincial guidelines. Varying opinions exist about the length of time that student assessment data remains valid. Whether or not to update a student's psychological assessment should be determined by the school psychologist. The decision will depend on the need exhibited, the age at which the student was initially assessed, whether a full or partial psychological assessment is needed, as well as relevance of the original information to the student's current functioning. Older reports can provide valuable developmental information and background information when reviewed in the context of the student's current academic performance. If the student is demonstrating evidence that their learning profile may have changed, if the student was young at the time of the first assessment, or if cautions to validity of the test results were made in the initial assessment, then reassessment may take place if the school psychologist, in their professional judgment, deems it appropriate. It should be noted, however, that some diagnoses, for example "learning disabilities", are generally stable in assessments of cognitive functioning, and if current academic information supports the original diagnosis, it is very unlikely that an updated assessment is necessary to provide new information about the student.

f) Psychological Test Usage

School districts must ensure that Psychology Interns, Psychometrists II, Residents in Psychology and Psychologists have the appropriate and up-to-date tools in order to conduct formal assessments. Only Psychology Interns, Psychometrists II, Residents in Psychology and Psychologists should administer and interpret Level C tests to students in the district. This would include intellectual and neuropsychological testing, as well as some psychosocial, personality, and norm-referenced behavioural measures. To allow non-qualified individuals to view, access, or use these tests jeopardizes test security, standardized administration procedures, and correct interpretation of the data obtained in the assessment, which results in an ethical violation and a disservice to the student. Such practices also may have implications in terms of civil liability and violation of jurisdictional law regulating the practice of psychology, as well as being a copyright violation.

g) Office Space

As a condition of the code of ethics, school psychologists, like all psychologists, have a duty to protect client information. As such, the school psychologist requires access to a private space to ensure secure telephone and face-to-face conversations with clients as well as a locked and secure filing system for client records, including test protocols, reports, and other personal notes which cannot be shared with other district staff members. To ensure the highest degree of confidentiality possible, it is strongly recommended that if there is to be shared office space, that it be with another school psychologist.

School psychologists have a particular responsibility to prevent inadvertent disclosure of private information. Unfortunately, this can occur easily if the school psychologists do not have an adequate office, privacy for telephone conversations, or secure filing space, leaving confidential materials vulnerable to be seen or overheard by people with access to temporary work and storage spaces.

h) Professional Liability Insurance

As employees of the New Brunswick provincial government, it is understood that professional liability insurance is provided by the employer. There should be no need for an individual school psychologist to carry private liability insurance unless that person also maintains a private practice, in which case the private practice would need separate liability coverage.

i) Private Practice Guidelines for School Psychologists

As set out by the EECD, there are conditions under which school psychologists, as public servants, may set up a private practice while abiding by the conflict of interest guidelines of the EECD (Appendix F, Policy 213A). Specifically, both provincial government and CPA ethical principles require that there be clear boundaries around each function of a school psychologist, and if a private practice is maintained, it must be with a different clientele than would be served in their public service role, and be accommodated and supplied privately and not using government time or properties.

j) Parental Rights and Responsibilities:

Although not unique to the role of the school psychologist, the involvement of parents in their children's education is of utmost importance. Hence, the role of parents and their responsibilities in this cooperative effort are outlined here:

- Within the collaborative consultation model employed by the EECD, parents will be made aware of the supportive role played by school psychologists in terms of district, classroom and school team support. While parents can expect that these activities are being undertaken by the school psychologist on behalf of student learning and behavioural enhancement, they may not be made aware directly of a psychologist's involvement at Tier 1 or 2, unless they are invited to attend a meeting at the discretion of the school staff.
- Parents are active participants in the assessment process for their children. They are expected to provide written, informed consent to the school psychologist, and also allow the school psychologist to contact other service providers involved with the student so that a complete, multi-dimensional picture of the student's academic needs and/or functions of behaviours are obtained for the assessment.
- At the end of an assessment, the parents will receive feedback, and possibly, a copy of the psychologist's written report, which will be discussed at a case conference (feedback session) with the psychologist. School staff will also likely be involved in this feedback session. Parents are encouraged to retain their copy of the report for future reference.
- Parents will be expected to participate in any program planning involving their child, and assist with monitoring the student's progress on the plan.
- Parents will have access to their child's Educational Record, as defined by EECD, which includes report cards and any assessment reports.
- Parents will not be able to access psychological test data or test questions, nor will they be able to review test protocols, as these documents are protected by copyright laws by the test developers. If requested, the psychologist can discuss the student's test profile with the parents in terms of percentiles or other appropriate statistical descriptions.

Epilogue

“...School psychologists are [among] the most highly trained mental health experts in schools. In addition to knowledge about prevention, intervention, and evaluation for a number of childhood problems, school psychologists have unique expertise regarding issues of learning and schools. It is [school psychologists’] ethical responsibility to become involved in programs aimed at problems that are broader than assessing and diagnosing what is wrong with a child. As the most experienced school professionals in this area, school psychologists must become invested in addressing social and human ills ... Although [school psychologists] will not ‘solve’ these ills, [they] must have a role in ameliorating their impact on the lives of children.” Sheridan, S. and Gutkin, T. (2000)

Appendices:

- A. Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists, DoE, NB,
http://www.cpa.ca/documents/Guidelines_School_Psychologists.pdf
- B. School-Based Education Support Services Teams to Support Inclusive Education
- C. Guidelines for Licensing, CPNB
http://www.cpnb.ca/en/guidelines_licensing.aspx
- D. Policy 213A, Conflict of Interest Guidelines for School Psychologists
<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/213A.pdf>

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