



**Professional Conduct Manual  
For School Psychologists**

*containing*

- **The Principles For Professional Ethics**
  
- **Guidelines For The Adjudication  
Of Ethical Complaints**
  
- **The Standards For The Provision Of  
School Psychological Services**

*Revised 1999*

# FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

## PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

### PREFACE

The Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) hereby adopts and endorses this *Professional Conduct Manual*. This document shall serve as the appropriate standard for the practice of school psychology in Florida. In addition, school psychologists are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics of the education profession of the State of Florida (Chapter 6B-1, Florida Administrative Code) and to Chapter 490 of the Florida Statutes, which provides for the licensure of school psychologists in Florida.

A primary purpose of this document is to update the *Professional Conduct Manual* which has served as the benchmark for the standard of school psychological practice in Florida since its adoption by the FASP board in 1991. There are several modifications to this manual, perhaps most notably the addition of "Professional Practices- Working with Ethnically, Linguistically, and Culturally Diverse Populations." This document also seeks to be more aligned with the most recent NASP *Professional Conduct Manual for School Psychologists*, adopted by the delegate assembly in 1997. Therefore, the current language throughout this document seeks to be increasingly sensitive to the civil and educational rights of all students. The modifications also reflect the ethical challenges that may result from the increasing use of technology in the field. As a result, this document in part serves to guide school psychologists in their dealings with an increasingly diverse population in Florida and the issues that arise with the rapidly growing use of technology.

Certainly, the task of updating the *Professional Conduct Manual* was made significantly lighter as a result of the diligent work that went into the initial writing and development of the 1991 edition of the *Professional Conduct Manual*. For this, Dr. Russ Armor, Dr. Philip Lazarus, and Dr. Patricia Howard are to be thanked and commended. Phil Lazarus is especially appreciated for leading the way in recognizing the need for the addition of the section on working with diverse populations and for working closely with the Ethics Committee and the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Committee to accomplish this task. A special thanks to all those FASP board members who contributed their expertise in technology, cultural diversity, and lexicology (most notably Dr. Gene Cash and Dr. Marty Levine in the latter category) to bring this current manual to fruition. May this provide a valuable resource to all school psychologists as we provide ethical, comprehensive services to the children, youth and families of Florida in the coming years.

*Mary Alice Myers, Ed. D.*  
*Chairperson*  
*Ethics and Standards of Practice Committee*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Standards for professional conduct, usually referred to as ethics, recognize the obligation of professional persons to provide services and to conduct themselves so as to place the highest esteem on human rights and individual dignity. A code of ethics is an additional professional technique which seeks to ensure that each person served will receive the highest quality of service. Even though ethical behavior involves interactions between the professional, the person served, and employing institutions, responsibility for ethical conduct must rest with the professional.

School psychology is a specialty area within the larger group of professional psychologists. Within this specialty area, circumstances may develop for school psychologists which are not clearly dealt with in other ethical guidelines. This possibility is heightened by intense concern for such issues as due process, protection of individual rights, record keeping, accountability and equal access to educational opportunity.

The most basic ethical principle is the responsibility to perform only those services for which the professional has acquired a recognized level of competency. Accommodations must be made for the uncertainties associated with the delivery of psychological services in situations in which rights of students, parents, schools, and society may conflict.

The intent of these guidelines is to provide clarification which will facilitate the delivery of high quality school psychological services in schools or communities. Thus these guidelines acknowledge the fluid and expanding functions of the school and community. In addition to these ethical standards, there is the ever present necessity to be familiar with legal mandates. The school psychologist is responsible for complying with legal requirements.

The ethical standards in this guide are organized into several sections representing the multifaceted concerns with which school psychologists must deal. The grouping arrangement is a matter of convenience and principles discussed in one section may also apply to other areas and situations. Attempts have been made to address specifically the many ethical issues and concerns which are unique to the school psychologists in the state of Florida. As Florida is varied and complex sociologically, ethnically, and geographically, all issues relative to the practice of sound, professional ethical practices may not be addressed by this publication. The purpose of the Ethics and Standards of Practice Committee of the Florida Association of School Psychologists is to serve the profession of school psychology, its members, and the consumers of school psychological services in ensuring the ethical practice of school psychology.

## **II. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY**

### **A) General**

1. The school psychologist's role mandates a mastery of skills in both education and psychology. In the interest of children and adults served in both public and private sectors, school psychologists strive to maintain high standards of competence. School psychologists recognize the strengths, as well as the limitations, of their training and experience, and only provide services in their areas of competence. They must be professional in the on-going pursuit of knowledge, training and research based expertise with the welfare of children, families and other individuals in mind.

2. School psychologists offer only those services which are within their individual area of training and experience. Competence levels, education, training and experience are accurately represented to schools and clients in a professional manner. In no case, however, may a school psychologist deliver services beyond the limits of his or her competency and expertise, except under direct supervision of an individual with the requisite competency and expertise, as part of his or her training. In such training situations, the client, parent(s), or guardian(s) should be informed of the trainee status of the person providing the service. School psychologists do not use affiliations with other professional persons or with institutions to imply a level of professional competence exceeding that which has actually been achieved.
3. School psychologists are aware of their limitations and enlist the assistance of other specialists in supervisory, consultative or referral roles as appropriate in providing services competently.
4. School psychologists recognize the need for continuing professional development and pursue opportunities to learn new procedures, become current with new research and technology, and advance with changes that benefit children and families. Though a minimal level of continuing education is currently required to maintain state certification for school practice and licensure for private practice, additional enhancement of professional skills is a matter of ethical responsibility. Professional development also includes maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of community resources so that clients may be linked to services most appropriate to their specific needs.
5. School psychologists refrain from involvement in any activity in which their personal problems or conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness. Competent professional assistance is sought to alleviate such problems and conflicts in professional relationships.
6. School psychologists know and adhere to the *Principles for Professional Ethics* and apply them to situations within their employment and/or practice setting. Ignorance or misapplication of an ethical principle is not a reasonable defense against a charge of unethical behavior.

### **III. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A) General**

1. School psychologists take responsibility for their actions in a multitude of areas of service, and in so doing maintain the highest standards of their profession. They are committed to the application of professional expertise for promoting improvement in the quality of life available to the student, family, school, and community. This objective is pursued in ways that protect the dignity and rights of those served. School psychologists accept responsibility for the consequences of their acts and ensure that professional skills, position and influence are applied only for purposes which are consistent with these values.

2. School psychologists respect each person with whom they are working and deal justly and impartially with each regardless of his or her physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, social, cultural, gender, sexual orientation, racial, linguistic, or religious characteristics.
3. School psychologists apply influence, position and professional skills in ways that protect the dignity and rights of those served. They promote the improvement of the quality of education and/ or life in general when determining assessment, counseling and intervention.
4. School psychologists define the direction and the nature of personal loyalties, objectives, and competencies, and advise and inform all persons concerned of these commitments.
5. School psychologists working in both public schools and private settings maintain professionalism in their relationships with students, parents, the school and community. They inform students/clients of any problematic or limiting aspects of the potential professional relationship prior to beginning psychological services of any type. School psychologists recognize the need for parental involvement in the provision of school psychological services to minors and the significant influence parents have on the student's growth.
6. In situations where there are divided or conflicting interests (such as between parents, school, student, trainer, etc.) school psychologists are responsible for attempting to work out a plan of action which encourages mutual benefit and protection of rights for all involved.
7. School psychologists do not exploit their professional relationships with students, employees, clients or research participants sexually or otherwise. School psychologists do not harass or demean others based on personal characteristics. School psychologists neither engage in, nor condone, deliberate comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature in their professional functioning.
8. The school psychologist recognizes the special needs of Limited English Proficient clients and takes language, cultural, educational and environmental factors into consideration when working with this population. It is the school psychologist's responsibility to be aware of the limitations involved in using standardized tests with Limited English Proficient students and to ensure that all psychoeducational assessment proceeds in as non-biased a manner as possible. This includes communicating and data collecting in the primary language of the client, parent or guardian whenever possible; using multidimensional assessment; utilizing observational data from different sources; and reporting results with precautionary statements when appropriate. The school psychologist recognizes that special skills are needed to work effectively with Limited English Proficient clients. The responsibility of the professional person is to perform only those services for which that individual has acquired competency. Therefore, Limited English Proficient clients should be referred to appropriately trained professionals whenever the requisite competencies needed to help such individuals are beyond the school psychologist's expertise.

9. School psychologists respect the confidentiality of information obtained during their professional work. Information is revealed only with the informed consent of the client, or the minor student's parent or legal guardian, except in those situations in which failure to release information would result in clear danger to the client, the minor student or others, or in situations in which the release of information is required by law.
10. School psychologists discuss confidential information only for professional purposes and only with persons who have a legitimate need to know.
11. Confidential materials which are legally obsolete will be shredded or otherwise destroyed before placement in trash receptacles or recycling bins.
12. School psychologists inform their clients or parents/guardians of minors of the limits of confidentiality.

**B) Students/Clients**

1. School psychologists are guided by an awareness of the intimate nature of examination of personal aspects of an individual. School psychologists use an approach which reflects a humanistic concern for dignity and personal integrity.
2. School psychologists inform the student/client about important aspects of their relationship in a manner that is understood by the student/client. The explanation includes the uses to be made of information, persons who will receive specific information, and possible implications of results.
3. School psychologists recognize the obligation to the student/client and respect the student's/client's right of choice to enter, or to participate, in services voluntarily.
4. School psychologists inform the student/client of the outcomes of assessment, counseling or other services. Contemplated changes in program, plans for further services and other pertinent information are discussed with the student/client as a result of services. An account of alternatives available to the student/client is included in the discussion.
5. The student/client is informed by the school psychologist of those who will receive information about the services provided and the possible outcomes. The sharing of information is formulated to fit the age and maturity level of the student/client and the nature of the information.

**C) Parents (or Legal Guardians)**

1. School psychologists confer with parents of minor students regarding assessment, counseling and intervention plans in language understandable to the parents. They strive to establish a set of alternatives and suggestions that take into account the values and skills of each parent.
2. School psychologists recognize the importance of parental support and seek to obtain this by assuring that there is direct parent contact prior to seeing minor

students/clients. They secure continuing parental involvement by a frank and prompt reporting to the parent of findings and progress.

3. School psychologists respect the wishes of parents who object to school psychological services and attempt to guide parents to alternative community resources to enable the student/client to get needed help.
4. School psychologists discuss recommendations and plans for assisting the student/client with the parent. The discussion includes alternatives associated with each set of plans and respects the ethnic/cultural values of the family. The parents are advised as to sources of help available at school and in the community.
5. School psychologists inform parents of the nature of records made of parent conferences and evaluations of the minor student/client. Rights of confidentiality and content of reports are shared.

**D) School Districts**

1. School psychologists employed by school districts are knowledgeable of the organization, philosophy, goals, objectives and methodology of the district in which they are employed.
2. School psychologists recognize that a working understanding of the goals, processes and legal requirements of the educational system is essential for an effective relationship with the school district.
3. Familiarization with organization, instructional materials and teaching strategies of the school district are requisites to enabling school psychologists to contribute to the common objective of fostering maximum self development opportunities for each student/client.
4. School psychologists accept the responsibility of being members of the staff of the schools to which they are assigned. They recognize the need to establish and maintain an integral role within the school system. School psychologists establish clear roles for themselves within the school system and the community.

**E) Community**

1. Although enjoying professional identity as a school psychologist, school psychologists are also citizens, thereby accepting the same responsibilities and duties expected of all members of society. School psychologists are free to pursue individual interests, except to the degree that these may compromise fulfillment of their professional responsibilities and have negative impact on the profession. Awareness of such impact guides public behavior.
2. As citizens, school psychologists may exercise their constitutional rights as the basis for procedures and practices designed to bring social change. Such activities are conducted as involved citizens and not as representatives of the profession of school psychology or of an employer.

3. As employees or employers, in public or private domains, school psychologists do not engage in or condone practices that discriminate against anyone based on race, handicap, age, gender, sexual preference, religion, national origin, economic status, or native language.
4. School psychologists avoid any action that could violate or diminish civil and legal rights of student/clients.
5. School psychologists in public and private practice have the responsibility of adhering to federal, state and local laws and ordinances governing their practice. If such laws are in conflict with existing ethical guidelines, school psychologists proceed toward resolution of such conflict through positive, respected, and legal channels.

F) **Related Professions**

1. School psychologists respect and understand the areas of competence of other professions. They work in full cooperation with other professional disciplines in a relationship based on mutual respect and recognition of the multidisciplinary services needed to meet the needs of the students/clients. They recognize the role and obligation of the institution or agency with which other professionals are associated.
2. School psychologists recognize the areas of competence of related professions and other professionals in the field of school psychology. They encourage and support the use of all the resources that best serve the interests of their students/clients. Professional services, as well as technical and administrative resources, are sought in the effort of providing the best possible professional service.
3. School psychologists working within the school system explain their professional competencies to other professionals, including role descriptions, assignment of services, and the working relationships among varied professionals within the system.
4. School psychologists cooperate with other professionals and agencies with the rights and needs of their student/client in mind. If a student/client is receiving similar services from another professional, school psychologists work to ensure coordination of services. Private practice school psychologists do not offer their own services to those already receiving similar services. As school psychologists working within the school system, a need to serve a student already receiving similar services may arise as dictated by the requirements of the student's special program. In this case, consultation with other professionals serving the student takes place to assure coordination of services for the welfare of the student.
5. When school psychologists suspect the existence of detrimental or unethical practices, the appropriate professional organization is contacted for assistance in determining the procedures established by that profession for examining the practices in question.

#### **G) Other School Psychologists**

1. School psychologists who employ, supervise and train other professionals accept the obligation of providing appropriate experiences to further their professional development. Appropriate working conditions, fair and timely evaluations, and constructive consultation are provided.
2. School psychologists acting as supervisors of interns review and evaluate assessment results, conferences, counseling and intervention strategies, and relevant documents produced by the intern. They assure the profession that training in the field is supervised adequately.
3. When school psychologists are supervised in professional matters, this must only be done by a person qualified to assume this role as defined in the National Association of School Psychologists *Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services* and Florida Statutes. Supervision must be related directly to test administration and interpretation, therapeutic interventions, and all activities psychological in nature. This will include but not be limited to behavioral programs, diagnostic prescriptions, counseling, and psychoeducational evaluations. The supervising school psychologist shall ensure that staff psychologists adhere to the ethical and legal guidelines and regulations of the profession. Supervising school psychologists are also responsible for monitoring the quality of performance of each school psychologist included in their area of responsibility.
4. When school psychologists are aware of a possible ethical violation by another school psychologist, they attempt to resolve the issue on an informal level. If such informal efforts are not productive, steps for filing an ethical complaint as outlined by the appropriate professional association are followed.

### **IV. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES – PUBLIC SETTINGS**

#### **A) Advocacy**

1. School psychologists consider the students/clients to be their primary responsibility and act as advocates of their rights and welfare. Course of action takes into account the rights of the student, rights of the parent, and the responsibilities of the school personnel. School psychologists outline and interpret services to be provided. Their concern for protecting the interests and rights of students/clients is communicated to the school administration and staff as the top priority in the determination of services.

#### **B) Assessment and Intervention**

1. School psychologists strive to maintain the highest standard of service by an objective collecting of appropriate data and information necessary to work effectively with students. In conducting a psychoeducational evaluation or providing counseling/consultation services, due consideration is given to individual dignity and individual differences. School psychologists recognize differences in age, sex,

- linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds, and strive to select and use appropriate procedures, techniques, and strategies relevant to such differences.
2. School psychologists insist on collecting relevant data for an evaluation that includes the use of valid and reliable instruments and techniques that are applicable and appropriate for the student.
  3. School psychologists combine observations, background information, multi-disciplinary results and other pertinent data to present the most comprehensive and valid picture possible of the student. School psychologists utilize assessment, counseling procedures, consultation techniques and other intervention methods that are consistent with responsible practice, recent research and professional judgement.
  4. School psychologists do not promote the use of psychoeducational assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons through teaching, sponsorship, supervision, or in any other manner.
  5. School psychologists develop interventions which are appropriate to the presenting problems of the referred student/client, and which are consistent with the data collected during the assessment of the referral situation.
  6. The student/client is referred to another professional for services when a need for services is identified which is outside the competencies or scope of the school psychologist's functioning.
  7. When transferring the evaluation/intervention responsibility for a student/client to another professional, school psychologists ensure that all relevant and appropriate individuals, including the student/client when appropriate, are notified of the change and reasons for the change.

**C) Use of Materials and Computers**

1. School psychologists are responsible for maintaining security of psychological tests which might be rendered useless by revealing the underlying principles or specific content. Every attempt is made by school psychologists to protect test security and copyright restrictions.
2. Copyright laws are adhered to regarding reproduction of tests or any parts thereof. Permission is obtained from authors of noncopyrighted published instruments.
3. School psychologists who utilize student/client information in lectures or publications either obtain prior consent in writing or remove all identifying data.
4. When publishing or producing materials for consultations, intervention, teaching, or public lectures, school psychologists acknowledge the sources of their ideas and materials. Credit is given to those who have contributed to the product and recognition is given in proportion to the contribution. Plagiarism of ideas or products is a violation of professional ethics.
5. School psychologists do not promote or encourage inappropriate use of computer-generated test analysis or reports. School psychologists do not offer an unedited computer report as one's own writing. In addition, school psychologists do not

- attempt to interpret a computer scoring system for tests in which they have no training. School psychologists will comprehend the theoretical underpinnings of computer generated interpretations.
6. School psychologists maintain full responsibility for computerized or any other technological services used by them for diagnostic, consultative or information management purposes. Such services, if used, should be regarded as tools to be used judiciously without abdication of any responsibility of the psychologist to the tool or to the people who make its operation possible.
  7. In the utilization of technological data management services, school psychologists apply the same ethical standards for use, interpretation and maintenance of data as for any other information. They are assured that the computer programs are accurate in all areas of information produced prior to using results.
  8. Technological devices should only be used to improve the quality and timeliness of student/client services.
  9. To ensure confidentiality, student/client records are only transmitted electronically when privacy is guaranteed. Furthermore, the security of electronically archived records, data, and reports is ensured.

**D) School-Based Research and Evaluation**

1. School psychologists continually assess the impact of any treatment/intervention/counseling plan which they provide or are responsible for evaluating and terminate or modify the plan when the data indicate that the plan is not achieving the desired goals.
2. In performing research, school psychologists accept responsibility for selection of topics, research methodology, subject selection, data gathering, analysis and reporting. In publishing reports of their research, they provide discussion of limitations of their data and acknowledge existence of disconfirming data, as well as alternative hypotheses and explanations of their findings.
3. When presenting research or information, school psychologists take particular care when providing information through various channels of the media (e.g. television, radio, newspaper, public lectures) to ensure that the information or research is based on the expertise and competence of the school psychologist. Information should be consistent with these ethical principals and should not mistakenly or inappropriately represent the Association or the field of school psychology.

**E) Reporting Data and Conferencing Results**

1. School psychologists ascertain that student/client information reaches responsible and authorized persons and is adequately interpreted for their use in helping the student/client. This involves establishing procedures which safeguard the personal and confidential interests of those concerned.

2. School psychologists communicate findings and recommendations in language readily understood by the school staff, parents, and other relevant individuals. These communications describe both favorable and unfavorable consequences associated with the alternative proposals.
3. When reporting data which are to be representative of a student/client, school psychologists take the responsibility for preparing information that is written in terms that are understandable to all involved. Information is provided in such form and style as to assure that the recipient of the report will be able to give maximum assistance to the individual. The emphasis is on the interpretations and recommendations rather than the simple passing along of test scores and includes an appraisal of the degree of reliance and confidence which can be placed on the information.
4. School psychologists ensure and document the accuracy of their reports, letters and other written documents through reviewing and signing such.
5. School psychologists comply with all laws, regulations and policies pertaining to the adequate storage and disposal of records to maintain appropriate confidentiality of information.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES – PRIVATE SETTINGS**

### **A) Relationship with School Districts**

1. Many school psychologists (dual practitioners) work in both the public and private sectors, and in so doing, create a possible conflict of interest if they do not adhere to standards of professional ethics. School psychologists operating in both sectors recognize the importance of separation of roles and the necessity of adherence to all ethical standards.
2. School psychologists who offer school psychological services in the private sector must: hold a valid license as a school psychologist as defined by Chapter 490 of the Florida Statutes; operate within the ethical codes and standards of practice adopted by the National Association of School Psychologists and the Florida Association of School Psychologists; be knowledgeable of and conform to state and local licensure and state and local occupational laws; and conduct the practice of school psychology in a professional manner, holding above all other concerns the welfare of the client(s) and the general public.
3. Dual practicing school psychologists may not accept a fee, or any other form of remuneration apart from compensation by the school district, for professional work with clients who are entitled to such service through the schools to which the school psychologist is currently assigned.

School psychologists in private practice have an obligation to inform parents of free and/or mandated services available from the public school system before providing services for pay.

4. School psychologists engaged in employment in a public as well as private practice setting maintain such practice outside the hours of contracted employment in their school district.
5. School psychologists engaged in private practice do not utilize tests, materials or services belonging to the school district without prior authorization.
6. School psychologists carefully evaluate the appropriateness of the use of public school facilities for part-time private practice. Such use can be confusing to the client and may be criticized as improper. Before the facility is utilized, school psychologists enter into a rental agreement with the school district and clearly define the parameters of the use to the district and the client.
7. Dual-practicing school psychologists shall not use their position within a school system or agency to offer private services or to promote a private practice.
8. Conflict of interest occurs when the dual-practicing school psychologist, because of practicing both within the public and private sectors, finds that the best interests of his or her client(s) or of the system (e.g., school) may be compromised.

When the dual-practicing school psychologist becomes aware of an adversarial relationship between a private client and his or her employer, that school psychologist must take action to terminate this conflict of interest. In undertaking such action, the practitioner must take care not to jeopardize the best interests of the client or the system in which he or she is employed.

9. The dual-practicing school psychologist shall not provide services of the kind offered by his or her employing agency or system to anyone eligible for those services, unless the parent, guardian or adult client, upon being informed in writing of their eligibility for such free services through the agency or system, nonetheless elects to obtain and pay for the services privately.
10. The fact that routinely offered public school psychological services may not be readily available within a reasonable period of time does not justify the violation of any principle set forth herein. When backlogs and delays exist within the school system, the Association believes that the public welfare is best protected when the school psychologist works through local public authorities and/or the Association toward securing adequate and timely services.
11. The school psychologist is ethically responsible for all private services he or she performs or supervises regardless of the name under which professional services are offered to the public. When psychological reports are submitted to the public school system, the signature of the practitioner who evaluated the client shall appear on the evaluation.

## **B) Service Delivery**

1. School psychologists clarify financial arrangements in advance of services to ensure to the best of their ability that they are clearly understood by the client. They neither give nor receive any remuneration for referring clients for professional services.

2. School psychologists in private practice adhere to the conditions of a contract with a school district, other agency, or individual until service thereunder has been performed, the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated. They also have a responsibility to follow-up on a completed contract to assure that conclusions are understood, interpreted and utilized effectively.
3. School psychologists in private practice guard against any misunderstanding occurring from recommendations, advice or information given a parent or child which a school may not be prepared to carry out, or which is in conflict with what the district is doing for the child. Such conflicts need not be avoided however where the best interests of those served require consideration of different opinions. Direct consultation between the school psychologist in private practice and the school psychologist assigned to the case at the school level may avoid confusing parents by resolving at the professional level any difference of interpretation of clinical data or eligibility criteria for special education services.
4. School psychologists provide individual diagnostic and therapeutic services only within the context of a professional psychological relationship. Personal diagnosis and therapy are not given by means of public lectures, newspaper columns, magazine articles, radio and television programs or mail. Any information shared through such media activities is general in nature and utilizes only current and relevant data and professional judgement.

**C) Announcements/Advertising**

1. Considerations of appropriate announcement of services, advertising and public media statements are necessary in the role of the school psychologist in private practice. Such activities are necessary in assisting the public to make appropriate and knowledgeable decisions and choices regarding services. Only accurate representations of training, experience, services provided and affiliations are made by school psychologists. Public statements must be made on sound and accepted theory, research and practice.
2. Individual, agency or clinical listings in telephone directories are limited to the following: name/names, highest relevant degree, certification status, address, telephone number, brief identification of major areas of practice, office hours, appropriate fee information, foreign languages spoken, policy with regard to third party payments and license number.
3. Announcement of services by school psychologists in private practice, agency or clinic are made in a formal, professional manner limited to the same information as is included in a telephone listing. Clear statement of purposes with clear descriptions of the experiences to be provided are given. The education, training and experience of the staff members are appropriately specified. It is unethical to guarantee or to promise specific results or outcomes or to imply that the services offered are superior to services provided by other qualified and licensed professionals.

4. School psychologists in private practice may utilize brochures in the announcement of services. The brochures may be sent to professional persons, schools, business firms, governmental agencies and other similar organizations.
5. Announcements and advertisements of the availability of publications, products, and services for sale are presented in a professional, scientific and factual manner. Information may be communicated by means of periodicals, books, lists, directories, television, radio or motion pictures and must not include any false, misleading or comparative statements.
6. School psychologists in private practice do not directly solicit clients for individual diagnosis or therapy.
7. School psychologists do not compensate in any manner a representative of the press, radio or television in return for personal professional publicity in news items.
8. School psychologists do not participate for personal gain in commercial announcements or advertisements recommending to the public the purchase or use of products or services which imply the endorsement of the Association or the profession of School Psychology.

## **VI. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES- WORKING WITH ETHNICALLY, LINGUISTICALLY, AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

*Preamble: The following guidelines are taken directly from or adapted from the "APA Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations." These guidelines are intended to be aspirational in nature and serve as suggestions for practitioners working with ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse populations. It is the responsibility of the school psychologist to inform supervisors and administrators of appropriate guidelines in working with students and families of diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. The resources necessary to implement these guidelines are the responsibility of the school district in which the school psychologist is employed.*

### **A) General**

1. School psychologists have the responsibility to aspire to the Florida Association of School Psychologists *Principles for Professional Ethics* in psychological practice with ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse populations.
2. School psychologists educate their students/clients to the processes of psychological evaluation and intervention, such as goals and expectations; the scope and, where appropriate, legal limits of confidentiality; and the school psychologists' theoretical framework. Whenever possible, school psychologists provide information in writing along with oral explanations in language understandable to the parent/guardian.
3. School psychologists are knowledgeable of the relevant research and practice issues as related to the population being served.
  - a. School psychologists acknowledge that ethnicity and culture impact on behavior and consider those factors when working with various ethnic/cultural groups.

- b. School psychologists seek out educational and training experiences to enhance their understanding to address the needs of these populations more appropriately and effectively. These experiences include cultural, linguistic, social, psychological, political, economic, and historical material specific to the particular group being served.
  - c. School psychologists recognize the limits of their competencies and expertise. School psychologists who do not possess knowledge and training about an ethnic, cultural, or linguistic group seek consultation with, and/or make referrals to, appropriate experts as necessary.
  - d. School psychologists consider the validity of a given instrument or procedure and interpret resulting data, keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the student/client being assessed. School psychologists are aware of the test's reference population and possible limitations of each instrument with diverse populations.
4. School psychologists recognize ethnicity and culture as significant parameters in understanding psychological processes. Assessment and intervention by the school psychologist incorporates an understanding of the ethnic, linguistic and cultural background of the student/client and family. School psychologists consider cultural values and beliefs of the student/client/family when conducting psychoeducational evaluations and designing interventions.
  5. School psychologists respect the roles of family members and community structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs within the student's/ client's culture. In addition, school psychologists respect the religious and/or spiritual beliefs of the student and family, including attributions and taboos, since they affect world view, psychosocial functioning, and expressions of distress.
  6. School psychologists serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations obtain information on the language background of the student/client and understand the second language acquisition process and how it affects school performance and assessment results.
  7. School psychologists interact in the primary language of the limited English proficient student/client as appropriate to each individual case and, if this is not feasible, seek consultation and make an appropriate referral.
    - a. Problems may arise when the linguistic skills of the school psychologist do not match the language of the student/client. In such a case, school psychologists should seek consultation, and refer or seek referral of the client to a bilingual school psychologist who is competent to interact in the language of the student/client.
    - b. If interpretation/translation services are necessary, school psychologists work to make every effort to retain the services of interpreters/translators that do not have a dual role with the student/client to avoid jeopardizing the validity of evaluation or the effectiveness of intervention.
    - c. School psychologists interpret and relate test data in terms understandable and relevant to the needs of the assessed student/client.

8. School psychologists consider the impact of social, environmental, and political factors in assessing problems and designing interventions.
9. School psychologists should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices. School psychologists should acknowledge relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the students being served. School psychologists should promote acceptance of all students regardless of diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.
10. School psychologists working with culturally diverse populations should be aware of socially, culturally, linguistically and ecologically relevant factors impacting the student/client as appropriate such as:
  - a. Language(s) spoken in the home
  - b. Number of years in the country
  - c. Fluency in English
  - d. Family background
  - e. Community resources
  - f. History of prior schooling and language(s) of instruction
  - g. Cultural background factors impacting the student/client
  - h. Relationships with people of different backgrounds
  - i. Level of stress related to acculturation

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE ADJUDICATION OF ETHICAL COMPLAINTS**

## **PREFACE**

The Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP) recognizes the importance of maintaining the ethical practice of the profession of school psychology. In doing so, members of the Association adhere to the Florida Association of School Psychologists *Principles for Professional Ethics* and the National Association of School Psychologists *Principles for Professional Ethics*. Thus, this document has been developed to protect the general well being of individuals served by school psychologists in schools, agencies, institutions and private practice and to guide the practitioner in maintaining appropriate ethical standards of the profession.

## **VII. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Ethics Committee of the Association shall be responsible for developing and maintaining a well-defined position regarding both the ethical and professional conduct of Association membership. The principal responsibility is to ensure high quality professional practice in order to protect the general well being of clients served by the school psychologist both in the public and private arenas.

Members of the Ethics Committee recognize their responsibility to the profession as they assume a highly important role. Their charge involves the reputation of the profession and its members as well as the careers of practicing professionals. Members have a solemn duty to be aware of all ethical guidelines governing the profession as well as laws and rules regulating the practice of school psychology.

Committee members shall be directly responsible to the Executive Board of FASP. The Committee shall report findings and make recommendations to the Executive Board which shall have final authority over all actions to be taken and all documents published.

## **VIII. OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTION**

The major objectives of the Committee are to be educative and constructive and to intervene positively with individuals when there are questions regarding ethical conduct. The Committee will provide guidance to individuals regarding professional conduct, ethics and conflict of interest. The Committee will respond to concerns and requests for information regarding the ethical practice of the profession. A copy of this document will be available upon request to any member of the Association.

The functions of the Committee are to investigate complaints of alleged ethical misconduct, to obtain a thorough and impartial account of the behavior(s) or incidents, to

evaluate the character of behavior(s) in question and to offer recommendations to the Executive Board regarding resolutions or actions to be taken.

## **IX. SCOPE, AUTHORITY, AND OBLIGATION**

Allegations of ethical misconduct will be evaluated based on the provisions of the National Association of School Psychologists *Principles for Professional Ethics* and the Florida Association of School Psychologists *Principles for Professional Ethics*. In addition, those principles developed by the Ethics Committee and approved by the FASP Executive Board shall guide members of the profession in ethical conduct. Moreover, the legal regulation of the profession shall be guided by Chapter 490 of the statutes of the State of Florida and the rules of the Department of Health and the Department of Education. The aforementioned principles, standards, rules and regulations will be considered binding on all members of FASP.

The Ethics Committee will endeavor to settle cases informally. In cases which may require disciplinary action, the Ethics Committee will submit evidence of ethical misconduct and recommendation for adjudication to the FASP Executive Board.

When a complaint is received about a non-member, the Committee shall respond in an advisory or educative fashion. The Committee may refer any complaint to and cooperate with the Department of Health, school systems of the State of Florida, the Attorney General's Office or other agencies who have jurisdiction over the individual in question. The Committee may share relevant and factual information, refer the complainant to the more appropriate resource or agency, or cooperate in any manner deemed necessary to ensure the ethical practice of the profession.

When responding to complaints, members of the Committee have the obligation to consider the credibility of the complainant, to act in an unbiased manner, to work expeditiously, and to safeguard the confidentiality of the Committee's activities. Committee members have the added obligation to follow procedures which safeguard the rights of all individuals involved in the complaint process.

The Ethics Committee shall be further obligated to revise the *Principles for Professional Ethics* and the *Procedural Guidelines for the Adjudication of Ethical Complaints* at regular intervals in order to maintain up-to-date standards for and to clarify ethical practice.

## **X. RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES**

The handling of complaints and inquiries and the conduct of investigations will generally follow the procedures found in the *Procedural Guidelines for the Adjudication of Ethical Complaints* of the National Association of School Psychologists. Changes have been made to meet the requirements for a state association. The procedure follows:

- A) The Ethics Committee shall recognize and respond to all complaints and inquiries from any responsible individual or group of individuals. The individual(s) who petitions the Committee (hereinafter referred to as the complainant) need not be a member of FASP.

Oral inquiries may be addressed by the Committee chairperson. Unsigned complaints will not be investigated by the Committee.

- B) If an inquiry results in a complaint, the Committee chairperson will request that the complaint be formally submitted in writing. Only written statements expressing the details of the alleged misconduct will be accepted for action. Such written statements shall be signed by the complainant and should state in as much detail as possible the facts upon which the complaint is based. Identifying correspondence, records and activities at this stage shall remain confidential between the complainant and members of the Ethics Committee as well as the President and the Membership Chair of the Association and members of any ad hoc Fact Finding Committee.
- C) Within 15 days of receipt of a written statement outlining the details of the alleged misconduct, the chairperson or designee shall do the following:
1. Determine if the individual against whom the complaint is made (hereinafter referred to as the respondent) is a member of FASP. If the respondent is not a member of FASP, the complainant shall be so advised and, when appropriate, referred to other agencies and/or associations who would have authority in the matter. If the respondent is a licensed school psychologist who is not a member of FASP, or an individual practicing school psychology without a license, then the complaint will be forwarded to the Department of Professional Regulation and/or other appropriate authorities.
  2. If the information obtained from the complainant is insufficient to make a determination regarding the alleged misconduct, the chairperson may send a written request to the complainant, asking for clarification and/or additional information as would be needed to make such a determination.
  3. If the respondent is a member of FASP and the information obtained from the complainant is sufficient, the Ethics Committee chairperson, with any consultation deemed necessary, shall review the complaint. If it is determined that the behavior(s) would not constitute an actual violation of ethical practices, then the chairperson shall notify the complainant.
  4. If it is determined that the alleged misconduct, if substantiated, would constitute an actual violation of ethical standards, then the chairperson shall direct a letter to (by registered or certified mail, marked "confidential", signature by addressee only, return receipt requested) and advise the complainant that the allegations will be further investigated by the Committee.
  5. If the complainant refuses to permit his/her identity to be made known to the respondent, such refusal may serve as a basis for forfeiting the complaint process. However, the Committee may proceed on its own volition based on a majority vote. In such instances the Ethics Committee shall serve as the complainant. In either case, the confidentiality of the initial complainant will be maintained in accordance with the statutes of the State of Florida. Further action may be taken when an individual appears to have engaged in ethical misconduct that either endangers the general well-being of clients served, injures the Association or adversely affects its reputation, or is clearly inconsistent with or destructive of goals and objectives of the Association.

## **XI. CONDUCT OF AN INQUIRY**

- A) Within 15 days of the receipt of the signed release, the Ethics Committee shall inform the respondent, in writing, with the envelope marked “confidential” (by registered or certified mail, signature by addressee only, return receipt requested) that a complaint has been filed against him/her. This letter shall describe the nature of the complaint and indicate the principle(s), which appear to have been violated. A copy of the Standards or Principles, these procedures and any pertinent advisory letters of the Ethics Committee and/or the Executive Board of FASP shall also be enclosed. Ordinarily, the respondent shall be informed of the name of the complainant, when written permission to do so has been obtained. (See Section X, C-5 for exception).
- B) The respondent shall be asked to provide a written statement outlining his/her view of the situation in order that the Committee may be cognizant of all relevant aspects of the case.
- C) Whenever possible, the Ethics Committee shall attempt to resolve differences privately and informally through further correspondence with all parties involved. An attempt shall be made to bring about an adjustment through mediation to correct the behavior that led to the complaint.
- D) If the respondent does not reply in writing to the original inquiry within 30 days, a follow-up letter shall be sent to the respondent by registered or certified mail, marked “confidential”, return receipt requested, signature of addressee only.
- E) If the respondent fails to reply to the Committee’s inquiry or otherwise cooperate, the Committee may continue its inquiry, noting in the record the respondent’s failure to cooperate.
- F) As a rule, if the complainant wishes to withdraw the complaint, the inquiry is terminated, except in extreme cases where the Committee feels the issues in the case are of such importance as to warrant completing the investigation in its own right and in the interest of the public welfare or the Association. (See Section X, C-5)
- G) The Association will not recognize a respondent’s resignation from membership while there is a complaint pending before the Ethics Committee.
- H) Within 30 days of receipt of the written statement from the respondent, or (in the event the respondent fails to reply or otherwise cooperate) within 30 days of receipt of return receipt requested from the second notification of the Committee, the chairperson, through the advice of the Committee, shall determine if a violation may have occurred and, if so, what Standards or Principles have potentially been violated.
- I) If, in the opinion of the Committee, the complaint has a basis in fact but is considered likely to be corrected without further action, the chairperson shall so indicate in the record and inform all parties involved in writing.
- J) An *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee may be appointed by the chairperson which will be composed of one member of the Ethics Committee and a maximum of two impartial FASP members. This may occur if it appears that the complaint cannot be resolved by less formal means. The Ethics Committee Chairperson shall transmit within 10 days of

appointment to the appointed members of the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee, by registered or certified mail (in envelopes marked “confidential”, signature by addressee only, return receipt requested), copies of the following:

1. A cover letter specifying the requirement of confidentiality.
  2. The original complaint or material.
  3. The letter to the respondent apprising him/her of the nature of the alleged violation.
  4. The response from the respondent.
  5. Any further information related to the case.
  6. A copy of these procedures.
- K) The activities of this *ad hoc* committee will culminate in a written report to the Ethics Committee. The report will incorporate a description of the behavior(s) in question, an evaluation of the behavior(s), supporting data, and any recommendations deemed warranted.

## **XII. CONDUCT OF A FORMAL INVESTIGATION**

- A) The Ethics Committee or the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee shall recommend whether:
1. The case shall be closed, or
  2. Further investigation is warranted.
- B) When further investigation is deemed warranted, the respondent may be asked to meet with the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee or the Ethics Committee. At such time the respondent may seek advice from any individual, including an attorney or a member of the Association, for assistance in preparing and presenting documentary evidence. In addition, the Ethics Committee or the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee may at the discretion of the President or the Executive Board retain an attorney as counsel during the case.
- C) The Ethics Committee or the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee may take other action or institute another data gathering procedures, in addition to, or instead of, requesting a meeting between its members and the respondent.
- D) If the investigation has been conducted by the *ad hoc* Fact-Finding Committee, all evidence shall be forwarded to the Ethics Committee with a report within 120 days of its formation.
- E) Based upon the report submitted, the Ethics Committee may rule that no violation to ethical conduct has occurred and inform the respondent, complainant, and others involved in the investigation.
- F) If the Ethics Committee rules that a violation has occurred, then the Committee will send a synopsis of the evidence gathered and a citation of the ethical principle(s) violated to the respondent. The Committee shall inform the respondent of its determinations and recommendations within 5 days of its ruling. The Ethics Committee shall be authorized to

request that the respondent cease and desist ethical misconduct and/or apologize in writing to those harmed by the respondent's conduct. Less severe penalties or actions may also be carried out at the discretion of the Committee. More severe penalties or actions (such as suspension or dismissal from the Association) shall be by the authority of the Executive Board.

If an ethical violation has been ruled to have occurred, the Committee will recommend that the respondent take corrective measures to modify or stop certain activities or practices. Some possible ways the respondent may reply include:

- 1) A written admission of the violation as alleged with or without an explanation and a statement that the respondent will cease and desist such practices.
- 2) A written rebuttal to the alleged violation citing evidence.
- 3) A request for a hearing.

If the Ethics Committee rules that further action is necessary, then the details of the recommendations shall also be sent to the respondent along with the synopsis. The respondent shall be notified that he/she may make a request for a hearing on the charges within 30 days of the receipt of a statement of the charges and the Committee's findings and recommendations. Such a request shall be in writing and directed to the President of the Association.

- G) The request for a hearing before the elected members of the Executive Board (herein referred to as the Hearing Board) shall automatically be granted by the President. The right for a hearing shall be considered waived if such a request is not made in writing within the 30-day period.

### **XIII. CONDUCT OF THE HEARING BOARD**

- A) If a hearing is requested, the President shall select a chairperson of the Hearing Board who shall then conduct the hearing and assure that the procedures are properly observed. There shall be no communication between the members of the Hearing Board and the Ethics Committee regarding the specifics of the complaint prior to the hearing itself. The President shall *not* be a member of the Hearing Board.
- B) The hearing shall be a closed hearing. It shall be at the time of the next regularly scheduled Executive Board meeting unless the next Executive Board Meeting occurs within 45 days of the request for a hearing. If there is less than 45 days between the request and the next Executive Board meeting, then the hearing shall occur at the following meeting. The time requirements may be waived by mutual agreement of the respondent and the Hearing Board.
- C) At least 30 days prior to the hearing, the respondent and the Hearing Board members shall be provided with copies of all documents to be presented and the names of all witnesses that will be offered by the Ethics Committee in support of the charges and the respondent in defense of the charges.
- D) Presentation of the case against the respondent shall be the responsibility of the Ethics Committee chairperson or such others as the Ethics Committee has designated to

investigate the complaint. Legal counsel for the Association may participate fully in the presentation of the case.

- E) All evidence that is relevant and reliable, as determined by the chairperson of the Hearing Board, shall be admissible. Evidence of mitigating circumstances may be presented by the respondent.
- F) The respondent shall have the right to counsel, to present witnesses and documents and to cross-examine the witnesses offered by the Ethics Committee.
- G) The Ethics Committee may introduce rebuttal evidence.
- H) In the interest of obtaining a full and accurate record of the hearing, a tape recorder or other transcription device shall be used.
- I) Prior to or during the course of the hearing, by mutual agreement, a settlement may be reached satisfactory to all parties and the hearing adjourned.

#### **XIV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEARING BOARD**

- A) From the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Board shall have 30 days in which to issue its report and recommendation.
- B) The Hearing Committee shall mail its report and recommendations simultaneously to the President, the Ethics Committee chairperson, the respondent and others involved in the investigation.

#### **XV. FURTHER ACTIONS**

- A) In severe cases, when the welfare of the public is at stake and when the Ethics Committee or the Hearing Board deems it necessary to maintain the principles of the Association and the profession, the Ethics Committee may notify the Department of Health, school systems in the State of Florida, the Attorney General's office, the Department of Education, or other agencies who have jurisdiction over the individual in question as to its recommendations.

# STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

## PREFACE

The *Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services* represent the position of the Florida Association of School Psychologists regarding the delivery of appropriate and comprehensive school psychological service. The *Standards* are meant to provide direction to school psychologists, students and trainers in school psychology, administrators of school psychological services, and consumers of school psychological services regarding “good practices” in professional school psychology. They also delineate what services might reasonably be expected to be available from most school psychologists, and thus should help to define the field further. In addition, they are intended to educate the profession and the public regarding appropriate professional practices, and this hopefully will stimulate the continued development of the profession. The ultimate goal of the *Standards* is to enhance and improve the human condition, particularly with regard to children and adolescents.

A principal objective of the *Standards* is to inform policy and decision makers of the major characteristics of comprehensive school psychological services. The first two sections of the document contain suggestions and recommendations for federal and state educational agencies regarding the school psychology profession. The third outlines responsibilities which should be assumed by organizations which employ school psychologists. The final section presents the resulting responsibilities of the individual school psychologists.

It is recognized that not all school psychologists or school psychological service units will be able to meet every standard contained within this document. This fact particularly may be true with newer service delivery units and while these *Standards* are initially being disseminated. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that these guidelines will serve as a model of “good practice” for program development and professional practice on a federal, state and local level.

It is anticipated that school psychologists will perceive that it is in their own interest and that of the agencies, parents and children they serve to adhere to and support these *Standards*. Likewise, it is hoped that state and federal legislators, local school boards, and the administrative leaders of federal, state, and local education agencies will support the concepts contained within these *Standards*. While it is acknowledged that the *Standards* set requirements for services not presently mandated by federal law or regulation and not always mandated in state laws and administrative rules, it is intended that future amendments of such statutes and rules, and the state and local plans resulting from them, will incorporate the suggestions contained in the document. Furthermore, school psychological services are provided within the context of ethical and legal mandates. Nothing in these *Standards* should be construed as superceding such relevant rules and regulations.

The *Standards* provide flexibility in permitting agencies and professionals to develop procedures, policies and administrative organization in ways which meet both the needs of the agency and the professional’s desire to operate within recognized professional standards of practice. At the same time, the *Standards* have sufficient specificity to ensure that services will be provided appropriately and adequately.

The *Standards for the Provision of School Psychological Services* prepared by the National Association of School Psychologists was utilized as the model for the development of this document. District, state, and federal policies and publications were reviewed to attain a document maximally pertinent to the profession of school psychology in the state of Florida.

## **XVI. DEFINITIONS**

- A) A school psychologist is a professional psychologist holding as a credential a certification with a specialization in school psychology, a license in school psychology, or license as a psychologist who has specific training and experience in school psychology. The credential is based upon completion of a school psychology training program as specified in the *NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology*.
- B) A supervising school psychologist is a professional psychologist who has met all NASP requirements for credentialing, has completed three years of successful supervised experience as a school psychologist, and who has been designated by an employing agency as a supervisor responsible for school psychological services in the agency.
- C) Parent(s), as used in these *Standards*, include biological parent(s) and legal guardian(s) or appointed surrogates.

## **XVII. STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES**

The purpose of this section of the *Standards* is to provide guidance to state administrative agencies in regard to administrative organization, laws, policies, and regulations as they pertain to the provision of school psychological services.

### **A) State Level Administrative Agencies**

#### **1. Organization**

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) should employ at least one full-time school psychologist consultant for each of the five regions of the state. This position is to be responsible for addressing the following objectives:

- a) To provide professional leadership assistance to the DOE, local educational agencies, and the profession with regard to standards, policies, and procedures for school psychology program delivery.
- b) To support the utilization, funding, education, training, and inservice education of school psychologists.
- c) To participate in the development, coordination, and administration of state and federal programs that utilize and/or fund the services of school psychologists in state, regional, or district level educational agencies.

- d) To encourage and assist in evaluation, research, and dissemination activities to determine the effectiveness of school psychological services, preservice professional preparation programs, and inservice training programs; to determine needed changes; and to identify and communicate exemplary practices to training and service units.
- e) To maintain communication with and ensure the input of FASP into the procedure and policy making roles of the DOE as related to the psychological, social, health, and academic needs of students.
- f) To communicate and collaborate with the USDOE to ensure recognition and consideration of state issues and to facilitate input into federal policy and procedures.

## 2. Laws

- a) The Florida State legislature should ensure that the rights of parents and children are protected by the creation and modification of laws which provide for the services of school psychologists. These services include, but are not limited to, consultation for individuals, groups, and systems, assessment, and intervention. These services should be available to all children, their families and school personnel.
- b) The state legislature should ensure that school psychological services are provided in a free and appropriate way to all children, their families, and school personnel in need of such services.
- c) The state legislature should ensure that state laws recognize the appropriate involvement of school psychologists in educational programs.
- d) The state legislature should ensure that adequate funding is made available for the education, training, services, and continuing professional development of public school psychologists in order to guarantee appropriate and effective service.
- e) The state legislature should ensure that state laws provide for the credentialing of school psychologists consistent with NASP and FASP standards and that no other individuals be permitted to deliver school psychological services as defined within this document unless they are certified/licensed within another profession in Florida that permits said professional activities.
- f) The state legislature should create no laws which prohibit the school psychologist from the ethical and legal practice of his/her profession in the public or private sector, or that prevent the school psychologist from practicing in a manner consistent with these *Standards*.
- g) The state legislature should ensure that there are sufficient numbers of adequately prepared and credentialed school psychologists to provide services consistent with these *Standards*. In most settings, this will require at least one full-time school psychologist for each 1,000 children served by the LEA, with a maximum of four schools served by one school psychologist. It is recognized that this ratio may vary based upon the needs of children served, the type of programs served, available resources, distance between schools, and other unique characteristics.

### 3. Regulations

- a) All state agencies should utilize the services of the DOE school psychologist consultant(s) in developing and implementing administrative rules pursuant to all relevant state laws, federal laws, and regulations.
- b) All state agencies should seek the advice and consultation of the FASP and the DOE school psychologists prior to the development and adoption of rules pursuant to any state law, federal law, or regulation which involves or should reasonably involve the profession of school psychology.
- c) All state education agencies should utilize the services of the DOE school psychologist consultant(s) in the DOE review and approval of school psychology training programs.
- d) All state education agencies should utilize the services of the DOE school psychologist consultant(s) in developing and implementing administrative rules for credentialing school psychologists. Such rules should be consistent with *NASP Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists*.
- e) The Florida DOE should promulgate rules consistent with the principles set forth in these *Standards* and the *NASP Principles for Professional Ethics*.

## XVIII. STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYING AGENCIES

The purpose of these *Standards* is to provide employing agencies with specific guidance regarding the organization, policies, and practices needed to assure the provision of adequate school psychological services.

### A) Comprehensive Continuum of Services

Employing agencies assure that school psychological services are provided in a coordinated, organized fashion, and are deployed in a manner which ensures the provision of a comprehensive continuum of services as outlined in Section XIX of these *Standards*. Such services are available to all students served by the agency and are available to an extent sufficient to meet the needs of the populations served.

### B) Professional Evaluation, Supervision, and Development

#### 1. Supervision

Employing agencies assure that an effective program of supervision and evaluation of school psychological services exists. School psychologists are responsible for the overall development, implementation, and professional supervision of school psychological services programs, and are responsible for articulating those programs to others in the employing agency and to the agency's constituent groups.

## **2. Supervisor(s)**

The school psychological services program is supervised by a designated school psychologist who meets the requirements for a supervising school psychologist (Section XVI B) and who demonstrates competencies needed for effective supervision.

## **3. Availability of Supervision**

Supervision is available to all school psychologists to an extent sufficient to ensure the provision of effective and accountable services (See section XIX G for specific requirements). In most cases, one supervising school psychologist should be employed for every ten school psychologists to be supervised (an equivalent ratio should be maintained for part-time supervisors). It is recognized that this ratio may vary based upon the type of program served, staff needs, and other unique characteristics.

## **4. Intern Supervision**

A credentialed school psychologist meeting the requirements of a supervising school psychologist, with at least one year of experience at the employing agency, supervises no more than two school psychology interns at any given time (consistent with the *NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology*).

## **5. Peer Review**

After attaining independent practice status (see Section XIX E), school psychologists continue to receive appropriate supervision. The independent practitioner should also engage in peer review with other school psychologists. Peer review involves mutual assistance with self-examination of services and the development of plans to continue professional growth and development. Employing agencies assure that school psychologists are given appropriate time and support for peer review activities.

## **6. Accountability and Program Evaluation**

Employing agencies assure that school psychologists develop a coordinated plan for accountability and evaluation of all services provided in order to maintain and improve the effectiveness of services. Such plans include specific, measurable objectives pertaining to the planned effects or services on all relevant elements of the system. Evaluation and revision of these plans occurs on a regular basis.

## **7. Continuing Professional Development**

Employing agencies recognize that school psychologists are obligated to continue their professional training and development through participation in a recognized Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program (see Section XIX F). Employing agencies provide release time and financial support for such activities. They also recognize documented continuing professional development activities in the evaluation and advancement of school psychologists. Private practitioners who contract to provide services are responsible for their own CPD program. These activities should also be encouraged by employing agencies.

C) **Conditions for Effective Service Delivery**

In order to assure that employment conditions enable school psychologists to provide effective services, employing agencies adopt policies and practices ensuring that Sections XVIII C 1 through XVIII C 4 are met.

1. School psychologists should not be subjected to administrative constraints which prevent them from providing services in full accordance with these *Standards* and the FASP and NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics*. When administrative policies conflict with these *Standards* or the NASP or FASP *Ethics*, the principles outlined in the *Standards* or *Ethics* take precedence in determining appropriate practices of the school psychologist.
2. School psychologists have appropriate input into the general policy making of the employing agency and the development of programs affecting the staff, students and families they serve.
3. School psychologists have appropriate professional autonomy in determining the nature, extent, and duration of services they provide. Specific activities are defined within the profession, although school psychologists frequently collaborate and seek input from others in determining appropriate service delivery. Legal, ethical, and professional standards and guidelines are considered by the practitioner in making decisions regarding practice (see section XIX D).
4. School psychologists have access to adequate clerical assistance, appropriate professional work materials, sufficient office and workspace, and general working conditions that enhance the delivery of effective services. Included should be test materials, access to a private telephone and office, secretarial services, therapeutic aids, professional literature (books, journals), computers and related technology, and so forth.

D) **Contractual Services**

It is recognized that employing agencies may obtain school psychological services on a contractual basis in order to ensure the provision of adequate services to all children. However, each student within the educational system must be assured the full range of school psychological services necessary to maximize his/her success and adjustment in school. When an employing agency utilizes contractual services, the following standards are observed:

1. Contractual school psychological services encompass the same comprehensive continuum of services as that provided by regularly employed school psychologists. Overall, school psychological services are not limited to any specific type of service and include opportunities for follow-up and continuing consultation appropriate to the needs of the student. Individual contracts for services may be limited in scope as long as comprehensive services are provided overall.
2. Persons providing contractual psychological services are fully credentialed school psychologists as defined by the *Standards*. In specific instances, however, services by psychologists in other specialty areas (e.g., clinical, industrial/organization) might be

- used to supplement school psychological services as long as comprehensive school psychological services are provided overall.
3. Contractual school psychological services are not to be utilized as a means to decrease the amount and quality of school psychological services provided by an employing agency. They may be used to augment programs but not to supplant them.
  4. School psychologists providing contractual services are given appropriate access and information. They are familiar with the instructional resources of the employing agency to ensure that students they serve have the same opportunities as those served by regularly employed school psychologists.
  5. Contractual school psychological services must be provided in a manner which protects the due process rights of students and their parents as defined by state and federal laws and regulations.
  6. Contracting for services is not to be used as a means to avoid legitimate employee rights, wages, or fringe benefits.
  7. Psychologists providing contractual school psychological services provide those services in a manner consistent with these *Standards*, *NASP Principles for Professional Ethics*, and other relevant professional guidelines and standards.

**E) Non-Biased Assessment and Program Planning**

Employing agencies should adopt policies and practices in accordance with the following standards:

**1. General Principles**

- a) School psychologists use assessment techniques to provide information which is helpful in maximizing student achievement and educational success.
- b) School psychologists have autonomous decision-making responsibility (as defined in Section XIX D) to determine the type, nature, and extent of assessment techniques they use in student/client evaluation.
- c) School psychologists have autonomy (as defined in Section XIX D) in determining the content and nature of reports.
- d) School psychologists use assessment techniques and instruments which have established validity and reliability for the purposes and populations for which they are intended.
- e) School psychologists use, develop, and encourage assessment practices which increase the likelihood of the development of effective educational interventions and follow-up.

**2. Professional Involvement**

- a) A multidisciplinary team is involved in assessment, program decision-making, and evaluation. The team conducts periodic evaluations of its performance to ensure continued effectiveness.

- b) The multidisciplinary team includes a fully trained and certified school psychologist.
- c) The school psychologist communicates a minority position to all involved when in disagreement with the multidisciplinary team position.

### **3. Non-Biased Assessment Techniques**

- a) Assessment procedures and program recommendations are chosen to maximize the student's/client's opportunities to be successful in the general culture, while respecting the student's/client's ethnic background.
- b) Multifaceted assessment batteries are used which include a focus on the student's/client's strengths.
- c) Communications are held in the student's/client's dominant spoken language or alternative communication system. All student/client information is interpreted in the context of the student's/client's socio-cultural background and the setting in which he/she is functioning.
- d) Assessment techniques (including computerized techniques) are used only by personnel professionally trained in their use and in a manner consistent with these *Standards*.
- e) School psychologists promote the development of objective, valid, and reliable assessment techniques.
- f) Interpretation of assessment results is based upon empirically validated research.

### **4. Parent/Student Involvement**

- a) Informed written consent of parent(s) and/or student/client (if the student has reached the age of majority) is obtained in the native language (or form of communication) of the parents/guardians before assessment and special program implementation.
- b) The parent(s) and/or student/client is fully informed of all essential information considered and its relevancy to decision-making.
- c) The parent(s) and/or student/client is invited to participate in decision-making meetings.
- d) The parent(s) and/or student/client is routinely notified that an advocate can participate in conferences focusing on assessment results and program recommendations.
- e) A record of meetings regarding assessment results and program recommendations is available to all directly concerned.

### **5. Educational Programming and Follow-Through**

- a) School psychologists are involved in determining options and revisions of educational programs to ensure that they are adaptive to the needs of students/clients.

- b) The contributions of diverse cultural backgrounds should be emphasized in educational programs.
- c) School psychologists follow-up on the efficacy of their recommendations.
- d) Student/client needs are given priority in determining educational programs.
- e) Specific educational prescriptions result from the assessment team's actions.
- f) Where a clear determination of the student's/client's needs does not result from initial assessment, a diagnostic intervention or teaching program is offered as part of additional assessment procedures.
- g) Regular, systematic review of the student's/client's program is conducted and includes program modifications as necessary.

**F) School Psychological Records**

1. The employing agency's policy on student records should be consistent with state and federal rules and laws, and ensures the protection of the confidentiality of the student and his/her family.
2. Parents may inspect and review any personally identifiable data relating to their child which were collected, maintained, or used in his/her evaluation. Although test protocols are part of the student's record, school psychologists protect test security, observe copyright restrictions, and obey photocopying restrictions.
3. Access to psychological records is restricted to those permitted by law who have legitimate educational interest in the records.
4. School psychologists interpret school psychological records to non-psychologists who qualify for access.
5. School psychological records are only created and maintained when the information is necessary and relevant to legitimate educational program needs and when parents (or student if age of majority has been attained) have given their informed consent for the creation of such a record. This consent is based upon full knowledge of the purposes for which information is sought, and the personnel who will have access to it. The school psychologist assumes responsibility for assuring the accuracy and relevancy of the information recorded.
6. School psychological records are systematically reviewed, and when necessary purged, in keeping with relevant federal and state laws in order to protect children from decisions based on incorrect, misleading, or out-of-date information.

**XIX. STANDARDS FOR THE DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

The purpose of these *Standards* is to ensure the delivery of comprehensive services by psychologists.

**A) Organization of School Psychological Services**

1. School psychological services are planned, organized, directed, and reviewed by school psychologists.
2. School psychologists participate in determining the recipients and the type of school psychological services offered.
3. The goals and objectives of school psychological services should be available in written form.
4. A written set of procedural guidelines for the delivery of school psychological services should be followed and made available upon request.
5. A clearly stated referral system is in writing and is communicated to parents, staff members, students, and other referral agents.
6. The organization of school psychological services is in written form and includes lines of responsibility, supervisory, and administrative relationships.
7. Where two or more school psychologists are employed, a coordinated system of school psychological services is in effect within that unit.
8. Units providing school psychological services include sufficient professional and support personnel to achieve their goals and objectives.

**B) Relationships to Other Units and Professionals**

1. The school psychological services unit is responsive to the needs of the population that it serves. Psychological services are periodically and systematically reviewed to ensure their conformity with the needs of the population served.
2. School psychologists establish and maintain relationships with other professionals (e.g., pediatricians, bilingual specialists, audiologists) who provide services to children and families. They collaborate with these professionals in prevention, assessment, and intervention efforts as necessary. They also cooperate with advocates representing children and their families.
3. Providers of school psychological services maintain a cooperative relationship with colleagues and co-workers in the best mutual interests of students/ clients in a manner consistent with the goals of the employing agency. Conflicts should be resolved in a professional manner.
4. School psychologists develop plans for the delivery of services in accordance with best professional practices.
5. School psychologists employed within a school setting coordinate the services of mental health providers from other agencies (such as community mental health centers, child guidance clinics, or private practitioners) to ensure a continuum of services.

6. School psychologists are knowledgeable about community agencies and resources. They provide liaison and consulting services to the community and agencies regarding psychological, mental health, and educational issues.
  - a) School psychologists communicate as needed with state and community agencies and professionals (e.g., child guidance clinics, community mental centers, private practitioners) regarding services for children, families, and school personnel. They refer clients to these agencies and professionals as appropriate.
  - b) School psychologists are informed of and have the opportunity to participate in community agency staffings of cases involving their clients.
  - c) Community agency personnel are invited to participate in school system conferences concerning their clients (with written parental permission).

**C) Comprehensive School Psychological Services Delivery**

School psychologists provide a range of services to their clients. These consist of direct and indirect services which require involvement with the entire educational system: (a) the students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; (b) the families, surrogate caretakers, and other community and regional agencies, and resources which support the educational process; (c) the organizational, physical, temporal, and curricular variables which play major roles within the system; and (d) a variety of other factors which may be important on an individual basis.

The intent of these services is to promote mental health and facilitate learning. Comprehensive school psychological services are comprised of diverse activities. These activities complement one another and therefore are most accurately viewed as being integrated and coordinated rather than discrete services. However, for descriptive purposes, they will be listed and described separately. The following are the services that comprise the delivery system.

**1. Consultation**

- a) School psychologists consult and collaborate with parents, school, and outside personnel regarding mental health, behavioral, and educational concerns.
- b) School psychologists design and develop procedures for preventing disorders, promoting mental health and learning, and improving educational systems.
- c) School psychologists provide inservice and other skill enhancement activities to school personnel, parents, and others in the community, regarding issues of human learning, development, and behavior.
- d) School psychologists develop collaborative relationships with their clients and involve them in the assessment, intervention, and program evaluation procedures.
- e) School psychologists develop and implement short term and long term program planning through the FASP Executive Board and the Planning Committee.

## 2. Psychological and Psychoeducational Assessment

- a) School psychologists conduct multifaceted psychological and psychoeducational assessments of children and youth as appropriate.
- b) Psychological and psychoeducational assessment include consideration as appropriate of the areas of personal-social adjustment, intelligence, scholastic aptitude, adaptive behavior, language and communication skills, academic achievement, sensory and perceptual-motor functioning, environmental-cultural influences, and vocational development, aptitude, and interests.
- c) School psychologists utilize formal instruments, procedures, and techniques; interviews, observations, and behavioral evaluations are included in these procedures.
- d) When conducting psychological and psychoeducational assessments, school psychologists have explicit regard for the context and setting in which their assessment take place and will be used.
- e) School psychologists adhere to the NASP resolutions regarding non-biased assessment and programming for all students (see Section XVIII E 3). They also are familiar with and consider the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests* (developed by APA, AERA, and NCME) and other related publications in the use of assessment techniques.

## 3. Interventions

- a) School psychologists provide direct and indirect interventions to facilitate the functioning of individuals, groups, and/or organizations.
- b) School psychologists design programs to enhance cognitive, affective, social and vocational development.
- c) School psychologists facilitate the delivery of services by assisting those who play major roles in the educational system (i.e., parents, school personnel, community agencies). Such interventions consist of but are not limited to: inservice training, organization development, parent counseling, program planning and evaluation, vocational development, and parent education programs.

## 4. Supervision

School psychologists provide and/or engage in supervision and continuing professional development as specified in Section XVIII B and XIX F.

## 5. Research

- a) School psychologists design, conduct, report, and utilize the results of research of a psychological and educational nature. All research conducted is in accordance with relevant ethical guidelines of the profession (e.g., *APA Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants*).  
Applied and/or basic research should be pursued, focusing on:
  - a<sub>1</sub>) Psychological functioning of human beings;
  - b<sub>1</sub>) Psychoeducational assessment tools and procedures;

- c<sub>1</sub>) Educational programs and techniques applied to individual cases and groups of various sizes;
  - d<sub>1</sub>) Educational processes;
  - e<sub>1</sub>) Social system interactions and organizational factors associated with school communities; and
  - f<sub>1</sub>) Psychological treatments and techniques applied to individual cases or groups.
- b) School psychologists' involvement in research can range from support of advisory services to having direct responsibility for one or more components or a research project. These components may include planning, data collecting, data analyzing, disseminating, and translating research into practical applications within the school community.

#### **6. Program Planning and Evaluation**

- a) School psychologists provide program planning and evaluation services to assist in decision-making activities.
- b) School psychologists serve on committees responsible for developing and planning educational and educationally related activities.

### **D) Autonomous Functioning**

School psychologists have professional autonomy in determining the nature, scope, and extent of their specific services. These activities are defined within the profession, although school psychologists frequently collaborate with and seek input from others in determining appropriate services delivery. Legal, ethical, and professional standards and guidelines are considered by the practitioner in making decisions regarding practice. All practice is restricted to those areas in which the school psychologist has received formal training and supervised experience.

#### **1. Professional Responsibility and Best Practices**

Professional autonomy is associated with professional responsibility. The ultimate responsibility for providing appropriate comprehensive school psychological services rests with the individual practitioner.

While being cognizant of the fact that there often are not explicit guidelines to follow in providing comprehensive school psychological services, the individual practitioner has a responsibility to adhere to the best available and most appropriate standards of practice. There is no substitute for sensitive, sound, professional judgement in the determination of what constitutes best practice. Active involvement in supervision and other continuing professional development activities will assist the practitioner in adhering to best professional practices.

E) **Independent Practice**

A credentialed school psychologist who has completed a school psychology training program which meets the criteria specified in the *NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology* and three years of satisfactory supervised experience is considered qualified for independent practice.

F) **Continuing Professional Development**

The practice of school psychology has and will continue to undergo significant changes as new knowledge and technological advances are introduced. The development of new intervention techniques, assessment procedures, computerized assistance, and so forth, will require that practitioners keep abreast of these innovations as well as obtain appropriate professional education and training in these areas. All school psychologists actively participate and engage in activities designed to continue, enhance, and upgrade their professional training and skills and to help ensure quality service provision. These efforts are documented by participation in the NASP, FASP, or other formal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs, although they are not limited to such activities. Memberships in professional organizations, reading of professional journals and books, discussions of professional issues with colleagues, and so forth, are also an integral component of a school psychologist's overall CPD activities.

1. Participation in CPD activities and the maintenance of high professional standards and practice are continuing obligations of the school psychologist. These obligations are assumed when one initially engages in the practice of school psychology and should be required for continued credentialing.
2. School psychologists receive supervision by a supervising school psychologist for the first three years of full-time employment (or the equivalent) as a school psychologist. The supervisor shares professional responsibility and accountability for the services provided. While the level and extent of supervision may vary, the supervisor maintains a sufficiently close relationship to meet this standard. Individual face-to-face supervision is engaged in for a minimum of one hour per week or the equivalent (e.g., two hours bi-weekly). Standards for intern supervision are contained in the *NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Program in School Psychology*.
3. After completion of the first three years of supervision, all school psychologists continue to engage in supervision and/or peer review on a regular basis, and further their professional development by actively participating in CPD activities. The level and extent of these activities may vary depending on the needs, interests, and goals of the school psychologist, with more comprehensive service delivery requiring more extensive related professional exchanges. At a minimum, however, these activities are at the level required for successful participation in an appropriate CPD program.
4. School psychologists, who after three years no longer have supervision available, engage in peer review activities. These may include discussions of cases and professional issues designed to assist with problem solving, decision-making, and appropriate practice.

5. School psychologists readily seek additional consultation with supervisors, peers, or colleagues with particularly complex or difficult cases, and/or when expanding their services into new areas or those in which they infrequently practice (e.g., low incidence assessment).

**G) Accountability**

1. School psychologists perform their duties in an accountable manner by keeping records of these efforts, evaluating their effectiveness, and modifying their practices and/or expanding their services as needed.
2. School psychologists devise systems of accountability and outcome evaluation which aid in documenting the effectiveness of intervention efforts and other services they provide.
3. Within their service delivery plan, school psychologists include a regular evaluation of their progress in achieving goals. This evaluation should include consideration of the cost effectiveness of school psychological services in terms of time, money, and resources, as well as the availability of professional and support personnel. Evaluation of the school psychological delivery system is conducted internally, and when possible, externally as well (e.g., through state educational agency/review, peer review). This evaluation includes an assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, continuity, availability, and adequacy of services.
4. School psychologists are accountable for their services. They should make information available about their services, and provide consumers with the opportunity to participate in decision-making concerning such issues as initiation, termination, continuation, modification, and evaluation of their services. Rights of the consumer should be taken into account when performing these activities.

**H) Private Practice**

1. School psychologists practicing in the private sector provide comprehensive services and adhere to the same standards and guidelines as those providing services in the public sector.
2. School psychologists document that they have formal training, supervised experience, licensure and/or certification, and demonstrated competence, in any areas of service they intend to deliver to clients within the private sector. They also have a responsibility to actively engage in CPD activities.
3. School psychologists in private practice adhere to the NASP and FASP *Principles for Professional Ethics*, and practice only within their areas of competence. If the services needed by clients fall outside the school psychologist's areas of competence, the clients are referred elsewhere for assistance.

4. It is the responsibility of the school psychologist engaging in private practice to inform the client that school psychological services are available without charge from the client's local school district.
5. School psychologists who practice in both the public and private sectors do not capitalize on their school system positions to solicit referrals.
6. School psychologists who provide recommendations to parents for outside diagnostic, treatment, or tutorial services must provide a minimum of three names of individuals and/or agencies.
7. School psychologists offering school psychological services in the private sector ensure that, prior to the commencement of treatment/services, the client fully understands any and all fees associated with the services, and any potential financial assistance that may be available (i.e., third party reimbursement).
8. Parents must be informed by the school psychologist that if a private school psychological evaluation is to be completed, this evaluation constitutes only one portion of a multidisciplinary team evaluation. Private services must be equally comprehensive to those described in Section XIX C.
9. School psychologists in private practice provide and maintain written records in a manner consistent with Section XVIII F.

I) **Professional Ethics and Guidelines**

Each school psychologist practices in full accordance with the NASP and FASP *Principles for Professional Ethics* and these *Standards*.