

Loan Forgiveness Talking Points

- Importance of school psychologists. Roles of school psychologists.
 - We need school psychologists in Florida's schools. School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create healthy, safe, and supportive learning environments for all students that strengthen connections between home and school.
 - very few school psychologists can deliver comprehensive school psychological services if they are involved in more than 100 evaluations each year. Florida is one of 10 states that report a number of evaluations in a year that is equal to or exceeds 100. This high case load is caused by the current shortage of school psychologists in Florida.
 - 1 in 5 children and adolescents will experience a significant mental health problem during their education years.
 - The role of school psychologists is critical with the passage of NCLB and the reauthorization of IDEA, which emphasize accountability, student achievement, early intervention, and comprehensive research-based interventions.
- NASP recommendations on school psychologist to student ratio
 - NASP recommends a school psychologist to student ratio of 1:1000. currently, only 5 states achieve that ratio (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York.) The national median ratio is 1:1500. Florida is one of only seven states that report a median ratio of 1:2500 or above. In 2004, Florida had an estimated ratio of 2,702 to 1. The fact is that quality services are harder to deliver when the ratio of school psychologist to students is that high.
 - Florida's school psychologist to students ratio only improved by 2% from 1999 to 2004. there is still a great deal of progress that needs to be made.
- Critical need for school psychologists. Number of school psychologists retiring. Increase in the number of enrolled students in Florida from K-12th grade.
 - There is a shortage of school psychologists in Florida, which creates high case loads and difficulty in providing the necessary comprehensive academic and school mental health services and prevention service.
 - The lack of funding for the loan forgiveness program contributes to the shortage of school psychologists.
 - Over the next 10 years, Florida is predicted to have an additional 50,000 students enroll each year, which will require more school psychologists.
- increased funding of the loan forgiveness program will give Florida school psychology graduates the incentive to practice in Florida.
 - For the 2005-06 award year, those eligible teachers and other professionals who sought this loan forgiveness received an average of \$619.
 - Funding for this program has been going down every year for the past 5 years.
 - A study done by the GAO on loan forgiveness programs found that loan forgiveness recipients were more likely to complete their service commitment and continue service after their obligation had expired. Loan forgiveness programs minimize the risk that someone will commit to a particular major to qualify for financial aid, but will not continue in the field or perform their required service.

- Data on FSU graduates and possibly other Florida graduates on where they are practicing
 - FSU Class of 2006: 4 out of 13 went out of state (30%)
 - FSU Class of 2007: 5 out of 10 are planning to go out of state (50%)
 - Over the last two years, about 39% of FSU school psychology students have chosen or are planning to intern out-of-state.

- Cost of graduate school for school psychology specialist degree majors. The Specialist degree is what is recommended for practicing school psychologists. 3 year program, just like lawyers.

For the 8 Universities in Florida that offer a Specialist degree in school psychology:

- Avg. Fl. Resident tuition: \$339.66 per credit hour
- Avg. Non-Florida Resident: \$805.22 per credit hour
- Avg. hours for a Specialist degree in Florida: 78.37 hours
- Average total tuition for Specialist degree for FL. Residents: \$26,619.15
- Average total tuition for Specialist degree for Non-Florida Residents: \$63,105.09

Prepared by the following graduate students at Florida State University:

Erik Anderson
Sarah Mjoen
Brittany Roberts

**For more information, please contact Dr. Briley Proctor, Florida State University,
proctor@coe.fsu.edu**