



Missouri Association of School Psychologists

2022 Legislative & Policy Platform

Policy objectives addressing school psychology shortages:

Annual Collection of School Psychology Data

MASP supports the collection of annual statewide data on the number of school psychologists who hold the state certification of School Psychology and are providing school psychological services. Accurate statewide data that is collected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) annually will provide necessary information to stakeholders about the current shortage of school psychologists in the state of Missouri.

Loan Forgiveness for School Psychologists and Educators

MASP supports the forgiving of student loans to school psychologists and other educators that have worked in high needs districts for at least 5 years.

School Psychology Internship Funding for High Needs Districts

MASP supports secure financial compensation for Missouri school districts to apply for and use towards the funding of school psychology interns, especially in rural and underserved school districts.

Funding for Additional School Psychology Training Programs

MASP supports the use of state funds to support public Universities in creating new school psychology programs in areas of high need (ie, rural and underserved communities) to directly combat the current shortages of school-based mental health professionals in the state.

Policy objectives that ensure equitable outcomes for students:

Access to Mental Health in Schools

MASP supports equitable access to quality and comprehensive mental health services needed to support student success in school. There is a growing unmet need for school mental health services to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. Early intervention and ongoing supports, as part of the general education program, are critical to positive learning outcomes and a safe school environment. MASP supports innovative and collaborative initiatives designed to increase access to school mental health services from qualified providers, including certified school psychologists and master's level school social workers.

Funding for Public Schools with a Focus on Quality Education

MASP opposes efforts to expand funding for nonpublic educational institutes (i.e., vouchers to private schools) at the expense of their public school counterparts. Research has shown that this type of program has not led to increased academic outcomes and



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would only provide additional educational opportunities to a subset of Missouri children that are typically developing and are financially stable. We believe the Legislature should prioritize the quality of public education and pass public school priorities that are based in research to meet this challenge as opposed to the aforementioned harmful interferences which have proven to be ineffective, inefficient and unsustainable.

Critical Race Theory & Culturally Responsive Practices

MASP opposes legislation that stifles honest, respectful, and developmentally appropriate discussions about topics such as privilege, racism, bias, and systemic racism in our nation's schools. It is important to ensure that all students have access to content that is culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and academically engaging. MASP does support the use of and increased availability of federal funds to provide professional development on culturally responsive and antiracist practices within the school context, and other critical concepts necessary to promote an antiracist and culturally responsive education system.

Policy objectives that ensure schools are safe and supportive environments, including when responding to crises:

Legislation on COVID Safety Measures in Schools

MASP opposes any legislation that does not follow CDC and federal COVID safety guidelines and precautions. Not following scientific guidance during a pandemic could put both school district staff and students at greater risk for acquiring COVID-19.

Educational Rights of Parents and Schools

MASP supports the rights of parents to make educational decisions for their minor children, as well as to instill in their children the moral teachings and values of their choice. As such, MASP supports federal and state student and staff privacy laws, as well as the rights of educators to teach high quality, engaging, factual, culturally responsive educational material to their students.

Promoting Positive School Climate and Culture

MASP supports state-wide legislation and initiatives that promote comprehensive school safety efforts that emphasize both physical and psychological safety and allocate resources to help implement evidence-based, school-wide policies and practices that reduce bullying, harassment, violence, and discrimination for *all* students regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, language proficiency or immigration status.



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Policy objectives that improve outcomes for students with disabilities:

Revisions to Young Child with a Developmental Delay Eligibility Criteria

MASP encourages MO-DESE to revise the current eligibility requirements for Young Child with a Developmental Delay.

Revisions to Specific Learning Disability Eligibility Criteria

MASP encourages MO-DESE to revise the current eligibility requirements for Specific Learning Disability to more closely align with evidence-based practices, such as MTSS and Response to Intervention.

Educational Staffing Shortages

MASP supports the Legislature and the Governor in working with school leaders to develop a statewide, comprehensive approach to overcome the current educational staffing shortages. It is vital that Missouri seeks to provide educators with a competitive salary, necessary on-the-job training and support, and provide incentives to fill positions of the highest need: special education teachers, paraprofessionals and special education classroom aides.

Policy objectives that increase access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health services and comprehensive learning supports provided within an integrated service delivery system (e.g., MTSS):

Statewide School-Based Mental Health Task Force

MASP supports and promotes legislation that introduces a state-wide School-Based Mental Health Task Force if school psychologists and other school-based mental health professionals are explicitly included in the previously stated task force.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MASP encourages legislation and Department of Education initiatives that promote funds to be used to implement MTSS and other tiered systems of support. This includes access to quality and comprehensive academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports within multi-tiered systems of support in order to support student success.

Early Childhood Education & Intervention

MASP supports efforts to expand access to high-quality early childhood education opportunities in the state of Missouri.

Comprehensive School Psychological Roles

MASP supports efforts to elevate the role of school psychologists as mental and behavioral health providers in the state of Missouri.