Principals' Perspectives on the Roles and Skills of School Psychologists

by

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Despite decades of literature on how school psychologists could be utilized to better meet needs in school, the way a school psychologist is used still varies and schools still admit that they have unmet needs. Teachers and administrators ask for more staff to help support student needs while taxpayers want to know why more staff are needed.

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of principal perspectives on the roles and skills of school psychologists in order to better understand why roles vary, what barriers exist and what can be done to help both school psychologists and principals work together more efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of students, staff and families.

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase, the quantitative phase, involved an internet survey sent to principals in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. The survey questions were based on the roles school psychologists possess and the skills they are able to utilize according to the National Association of School Psychologists. There were 213 principals who participated in the survey.

The second phase, a qualitative phase, involved interviews of principals. Although 43 principals indicated they would participate in the follow-up interviews only

26 were available for the interviews at the time of the study. The individuals volunteered to be interviewed following phase 1. Principals were from the states of South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas.

Participants in both phases provided their perspectives on the roles and skills of school psychologists.

The results indicate that school psychologists remain a largely untapped resource in schools. Both school psychologists and principals have a responsibility to make sure that school psychologists are using their skillset more effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of students, staff and families.

Dedication

For the last four years I have served my community and school district as a Special Education Supervisor. My main responsibility was supervising the school psychologists. I see every day how hard the school psychologists work to serve the students, staff and families in each of their buildings.

Each comes to the building with different strengths and passions, but consistently focused on the importance of best practices and meeting student needs. They are collaborative, strategic and extremely knowledgeable. It has been an honor to serve as their supervisor. I hope that this study will be an asset to each of them as they look to the future of school psychology, not only in their own district, but in the state and nationally, as well.

I also work closely with principals and other building administrators. I know how hard they work to support staff, families and students. They want each student to be successful. They put in long hours to support their school community. They are often called to be experts in areas they willingly admit they do not feel prepared to address. Yet they give every bit of effort they have to make great things happen in the schools.

Although I miss working in the schools with students and families, I have been blessed to work at the central office. In this setting, I can work with all of the principals and learn from each of them as we collaborate to meet the needs of students. It has also been an honor and blessing to work with them. I am a better leader because of the opportunity to work with them as I have. My hope is that this study will help each of them reflect on how they are using the resources in their building, specifically school

psychologists. I hope the principals, based on the findings of this study, will re-evaluate how they are using their school psychologists. I believe we are very capable and can do better. I hope this study causes principals to have conversations they have never had or never had deeply, and allow for improvements in our daily work. We all want to be the best leader we can be so that students receive the best education we can offer.

Acknowledgements

I have been incredibly blessed to have many people in my life who have believed in me and supported me in each endeavor I have undertaken.

Ultimately, this work would not be possible without the people in my life who are the most meaningful to me. The possibility of this work began with my parents who planted seeds early in my life about education, persistence and determination. Those powerful lessons and conversations have had great impact on the person I am today.

Twenty years ago, I met the most handsome man I had ever seen. However, we were young and busy conquering the world in our own and separate ways. Luckily, nearly ten years later, our paths crossed again and he asked me to marry him. He is still the most handsome man I know; but he is also the most kind, loving and caring partner. Thank you for picking up the slack at home and with our family so that I could spend time pursuing one last degree. I am so thankful that God gave me you.

God has been incredibly generous to me and has given me 3 sweet children who have watched me work on my degree, cheered me on and periodically offered their 'help' to me. I hope, sweet children, that you have learned that you are capable of anything if you work hard and know that each of you, Ethan, Evelyn and Wesley are my greatest joys in life.

To Dr. Grady, thank you for believing in my potential and for pushing me to reach it. Thank you for giving me opportunities to touch the lives of others. Thank you for helping me to love research (GASP! I just confessed!) You have made a great and positive impact on my life.

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Thank you to the principals who took the time to complete the survey and especially those who were willing to participate in an interview. Your passion for your work was evident. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of children and families. I sincerely appreciate the time you spent speaking to me and the relationships and connections that we formed.

To Dr. MacFarland and Theresa MacFarland, thank you for believing in me, inspiring my passion for school psychology and cheering me on in my career.

To my many colleagues who believe in me and have supported me during my career, thank you for your partnership and collaboration. Specifically, Jenny Connelly, who supported, encouraged, pushed and believed in me from day one of my career. You are not only an amazing mentor and someone who I aspire to be more like, but also a dear friend.

With God all things are truly possible. He has taken a once scared and anxious girl with little confidence and turned her into a Ph.D. student. I will never cease to be amazed at your work. May this work be used for your glory.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of principal perspectives on the roles and skills of school psychologists in order to better understand why school psychologist roles vary so much from school-to-school and what can be done to improve the use of their comprehensive skill sets.

Why This Matters to Me

I earned my bachelor degree in 7-12 social science education. I student taught in Houston, TX in an ELL classroom. It was a great experience for someone who was from Nebraska and had never experienced much diversity. I learned invaluable lessons about the challenges of students and families who did not speak English and, in some cases, had just entered the country. I enjoyed it immensely and although I knew I wanted to work with kids as an advocate for those who needed a voice, my experience confirmed for me that teaching was not exactly what I wanted to do.

After my student teaching, I began graduate school in school psychology. I fell in love with the profession. The number of ways I could work with students and staff, the number of ways I could impact a child's life and the systemic work and change I could make in a school and for students and families was incredibly exciting. At times, it was overwhelming and scary because of the broad number of areas I needed to demonstrate competencies in, but I was determined, had great training thanks to Dr. MacFarland and Theresa MacFarland, and believed in the possibilities of changing the world as a school psychologist.

I entered the profession as an intern and spent 7 years as a school psychologist. During that time I both loved and hated the profession. What I was trained to do, what I was capable of doing, I was often not allowed to do. Pre-referral interventions? Only if I had time after I completed a ridiculous number of gifted and special education evaluations at very poor accuracy rate. I was hired to give assessments and only, if after I thoroughly tested every child I could get my hands on, was I able to help out here and there in other areas I was trained. Moreover, it was often more of a courtesy to me that they allowed me to participate in work outside of special education and gifted evaluations.

Crisis team? Nope, that was for school social workers and counselors. Yet interestingly, when a crisis gained national attention and our district put forth a message, it always referred to information from the National Association of School Psychologists.

One of the most shocking experiences I had early in my career was after the suicide of a young 6th grader in the building where I worked. When we arrived to school, everyone was in the office making plans with the school counselor taking the lead. I asked her how I could help. She told me to go back to my office and she would let me know if I needed anything. I was stunned and speechless but obediently returned to my office. Evidently she did not need me because she never came to get me. Apparently the leadership, information and research from our national association was useful, but we as school psychologists, were not.

In short, while I worked with wonderful people who taught me many things, many times their expectations of my knowledge and skills outside of the evaluation

process was very limited. With few exceptions, they expected almost nothing from me other than testing.

Until about 2004, when things started to change. Around that time response to intervention (RTI) was gaining national momentum and thanks to a special education director who understood the importance of RTI, my role and my work was finally allowed to start evolving. I was now seen as a building leader with the RTI implementation. I was able to get to know students and families much more deeply than I ever had before. I was able to consult with teachers. By the time RTI was ready for middle school I was asked to lead the implementation. By the end of 2008 we were doing great things for children in reading and writing, verified or not! I was excited about my work and knew that I was making a true and positive difference in the lives of children and families.

At the end of 2008, our assistant principal had retired, our special education coordinator moved into her position and I was asked to apply for the special education coordinator job. I did and so began my career in administration. What no one realized, is that as a special education coordinator I was doing all the work I was trained to do as a school psychologist but without the evaluation requirements. I was developing behavior intervention plans, leading professional development, supporting systems change with RTI, advocating for implementation of PBIS, coaching staff and helping my teachers review their data to make instructional changes, among other things.

After four years in that position, a job that I never imagined for myself came open at our central office as supervisor of the school psychologists and I was asked to apply.

At first I rejected the idea. School psychologists are incredibly smart people and most of them had more experience and were much smarter than me. I wondered how I would ever have any credibility with them. Then, I realized that taking the job of school psychologists' supervisor would allow me to make changes at the district level that I could not make for myself at the building level. So I applied, was offered the position and I am just starting my 5th year.

When I first began my work as a supervisor to the school psychologists, the culture of school psychologists was gloomy at best. They had been given the only documented pay cut in the history of our district through the elimination of a stipend and their overall FTE had been whittled away to ridiculous low psychologist to student ratios while at the same time, increasing FTE for a "district support team." This team was made up of a group of teachers that were essentially being trained to do much of the work a school psychologist could do. Instead of using the school psychologists to complete Functional Behavior Analysis when needed, coaching staff on implementing more effective plans, or developing good special education programming, we were cutting school psychologist time and adding time to the support team so that they could help schools with this. Not only were we misusing school psychologist training, we were wasting resources to train teachers to do what school psychologists already knew to do. It was illogical and wasteful albeit created based on good intentions and lacking an understanding of school psychologists' skills.

I am pleased to say through hard work, collaboration and because I work with amazing school psychologists, we have begun to change the culture. The momentum has

shifted so that now we talk about the use and focus of school psychologists in a way that I do not believe has ever happened in my district. Since I have taken over we have grown our overall FTE from abysmal 31.45, for almost 37,000 students to just under 41 FTE for almost 40,000 students. We have just barely got within the NASP minimum standard ratio of 1 school psychologist per 1000 students. During this same time six school psychologists have moved into leadership roles, including 2 who are now building principals and several more starting a leadership program, including a doctorate program. I have encouraged most of them, fully support it and believe that that their understanding of systems, best practices, behavior, law, ability to work with parents and staff, etc., perfectly positions them to be incredibly effective as building leaders.

Overall, I've been successful in my work with the school psychologists. However, it is not enough. My goal is to improve so that we have one school psychologist serving every 500 students in the district and offering comprehensive school psychological services to all students while collaborating with administration, social workers and counselors in the process. This is all in alignment with the NASP practice model for school psychologists. In my opinion, it is also a better use of taxpayer dollars.

So, admittedly, the changes are not as fast or as deep as I would like, mostly due to existing perceptions. For as many steps forward as I have made, I have several areas that have been less successful. For example, I still have principals and teachers who simply do not understand the comprehensive breadth and depth of training school psychologists have and simply do not understand the impact school psychologists could

have on schools, students and families. They will say things to me like, "They don't have time for that because they need to spend their time testing."

I have also heard people say, "Our school psychologists doesn't have time to do anything other than testing so we hired a behavior coach to work with students and staff on behavior." When I investigate this further I find that the 'behavior coach" is often a para or teacher whose title and responsibilities changed without additional training. So, instead of giving their school psychologist time to work with behavior, they turn that responsibility over to someone without the training the school psychologists have and then still comment their building needs are not being met. I say this truly believing that their intentions are good in spite of my disagreement with those decisions.

Because I believe so deeply about the impact that school psychologists can have on students, families and schools, I advocate for their work almost every minute of the day. I go from place to place, person to person suggesting that they might better meet their building and student needs by talking to their school psychologist. When others have tried to take away the roles of school psychologists and give them to others, I have fought tooth and nail to prevent that from happening. I have also worked with the school psychologist state association and made connections with state legislatures and state school board members in efforts to advocate for school psychologists.

As a leader, I am always focused on using taxpayer dollars as efficiently and effectively as possible. I ask questions like, "How can I use what I already have differently?" and "By doing so, can I meet more needs?" I ask this of myself and other leaders I work with. In my mind, wasting the training of school psychologists and/or

hiring others to do what psychologists are already trained to do is inefficient! Especially when we know we have unmet student needs.

My personal bias is this: If we were using school psychologists more effectively we could develop more effective systems, have better quality trainings and bring alignment to much of the work that is done in schools. We could provide students with mental health supports, provide students and staff with better student programming both academically and behaviorally, provide parents with much needed training, etc. This would not really cost us more, either, instead it would be using the resources we have differently, more efficiently and getting the most of out of them. And, ultimately, doing a better job meeting the needs of our students, which is what everyone in education wants to do.

My hope is that by the time I leave my position, staff in my district, at least, if not much of the state, will never think about using school psychologists in anyway other than to provide comprehensive services.

Summary

Schools recognize that they have needs that are unmet. Interestingly, decades of literature has shown that while school psychologists have extensive training in many schools they are used in a very narrow role. As someone who strongly believes in using what you have most efficiently I am puzzled by this reality.

So, it is with this passion for efficiently using what we already have, my deep belief in the power of effective school psychology services, my empathy for the school psychologists who want to do more but face barriers in their work, a desire to help

principals meet the needs of the students and ultimately a love for the students who come to us everyday with unmet needs that has led me to this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For decades, much has been written about the role and function of school psychologists.

In 1975, Grieger and Esposito wrote an article offering alternative ways for school leaders to utilize school psychologists. They recognized that this kind of change would require a change in the way that leaders think about school psychologists and who could receive school psychology services, a radical shift from the current use of school psychologists.

Forty year later, this idea had not fully been realized. Thomas Fagan (2002) described this slow moving change in this way, "On one hand are numerous pleas for school psychologists to expand their roles….On the other hand studies revealing that role time allocations are much the same proportionally as they were many years ago." (p.7)

Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) explained that limited school psychology roles are likely due to the interpretation of special education laws. In response they explained that while testing for special education services is important, it takes too long, provides too limited of information and results in disproportionate placement of students in special education.

The lack of realization of an expanded and comprehensive service delivery model is not due to lack of effort. Bradley-Johnson and Dean (2000) wrote, "We doubt there is another field where so many articles have been written, over such an extensive number of years by members of the profession calling for a change in the role." (p.1)

Although progress has been made, researchers continue to report on roles that school psychologists can and should fulfill which would move them from the role of a special education "tester and gate keeper" to a more expanded and comprehensive service delivery role that utilizes the full scope and breadth of school psychologists training.

The National Association of School Psychology (NASP) has written several statements and guidelines about how to utilize school psychologists more effectively. (NASP 2010b, Ysseldyke et al 2006) Their most recent revision of the NASP practice model calls for "comprehensive and integrated services" and describes school psychologists providing services designed to meet the academic, social, behavioral and emotional needs of all children and youth. (NASP 2010a, NASP 2010b) Naturally, NASP's Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services aligns with multitude of researchers who recommend that school psychologists can and should have multiple and comprehensive roles.

CURRENT USE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Many researchers have studied how school psychologists spend their time and found that the bulk of their time is spent on assessment and/or special education related activities (Curtis, Lopez, Castillo, Batsche, Minch and Smith 1999, Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka and Benoit 2005, Graves, Proctor and Aston 2014, Hosp and Reschly 2002, Stoiber and Vanderwood 2008). Hosp and Reschly (2002) studied the practices of school psychologists in different regions of the country. They found that school psychologists in every region spent half or more of their time in assessment activities and special education eligibility determination. Not surprisingly, those who spent more time in

assessment activities spent the least amount of time providing direct interventions. Yet, the participants indicated that their preferred activities were providing direct interventions and problem-solving consultation.

Stoiber and Vanderwood (2008) reported that school psychologists in urban settings were more engaged in traditional assessment. Given the amount of students school psychologists could be serving in urban settings, the indication that their roles are even more traditional than in rural settings is disappointing. The authors described the need for comprehensive school psychology services in urban districts with large numbers of students at risk for academic and behavioral difficulties by writing, "…the need for psychologists functioning within urban schools who can respond to a broad spectrum of problem behaviors using preventative and intervention approaches cannot be overstated." (p. 266)

Graves et al (2014) found similar results. He reported that school psychologists in urban settings are more likely to have high caseloads and traditional roles.

Curtis et al (2008) reported that school psychologists spend a majority of their time, 80%, on special education work. Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford and Hall (2002) also found that a most of the school psychologists time was spent in assessment related activities. Clearly, providing comprehensive school psychology services is impossible if most or 80% of your work time is spent in special education activities.

Fortunately, Larson and Choi (2010) found that since IDEA's reauthorization in 2004, the amount of time school psychologists report working in the traditional role (e.g.

special education eligibility determinations) has decreased. They also found that time spent on intervention, prevention services and team collaboration had increased. However it still remains a dominant role for school psychologists.

So what are the roles that school psychologists have so longed to fulfill?

EARLY INTERVENTION/PRE-REFERRAL PROCESSES

One of the roles that school psychologists could and should be engaged in, are processes for early intervention or pre-referral processes in schools. Lau et al (2006) described a model in the Minneapolis Public Schools where the district moved to a problem-solving model for early intervention and identification of special education students. Lau explained that involvement in a problem solving model for school psychologists expanded their role. Marston, Muyskens, Lau and Canter (2003) also wrote about the Minneapolis Public Schools experience and explains that school psychologists were more engaged in general education settings resulting in less time spent in assessment.

With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004, (IDEIA), a new focus was placed on early intervention services, specifically the "response to intervention" process. Much has been written about the process of Response to Intervention and the role of school psychologists (Ball and Christ 2012, Little 2013, Nellis, Sickman, Newman and Harman 2014, NASP 2009, Newman, Salmon, Cavanaugh and Schneider 2014, O'Connor and Freeman 2012, Sansosti and Telzrow 2010, Sullivan and Long 2010, Vujnovic, Fabiano, Morris, Norman, Hallmark and Hartley, 2014)

In order for school districts to effectively implement response to intervention practices, studies have found and researchers have called on school psychologists to be leaders in the RTI implementation. For example, O'Connor and Freeman (2012) wrote that it was not only important for school psychologists to understand both the framework and technical components of RTI in order to support the RTI implementation efforts, but also about the importance of school psychologists as leaders in the implementation process of RTI, "…it is our observation that many of the schools and districts that have made substantial progress in establishing RtI initiatives have done so because of substantial support and direct system-level actions taken by school psychologists in those settings." (p.298) The same authors described school psychologists as "critical" in the work of improving the overall effective implementation of RTI. In other words, the schools that have been most effective in the implementation of RTI have been led by or highly supported by the work of a school psychologist.

The behavior counter part to RTI is often referred to as Positive Behavior Intervention Supports or PBIS. There are an abundance of researchers who have also reported on the important roles that school psychologists play in the successful implementation of PBIS. (Clonan, McDougal, Clark and Davison 2007, Forman and Crystal 2015, Kaniuka 2009, Sugai and Horner 2006, Sullivan, Long and Kucera 2011)

In a study by Sullivan et al (2011) involving school psychologists and the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), the researchers reported that school psychologists are critical members of PBIS implementation teams, which are designed to support behavior and school discipline. Once again, the researchers

referenced school psychologists as leaders and emphasized the important role they should have in the implementation of PBIS. They described school psychologists as key team members while describing the school psychologists training and skills as "essential" in implementing PBIS effectively. They wrote, "Because SWPBIS is based on psychological principles, school psychologists are well positioned to make critical contributions to implementation efforts." (p.982) In short, the successful implementation of PBIS or SWPBIS can be more successful when school psychologists are involved.

Most recently, Eagle, Dowd-Eagle, Snyder and Holtzman (2014) explained that in order to implement a multi-tiered systems of support, including RTI and PBIS, with fidelity, the schools should rely on school psychologists.

In summary, the role of school psychologists in early intervention efforts, especially multi-tiered efforts, is well documented, noted as important, increasing overall but remains an insufficient use of these highly trained professionals.

MENTAL HEALTH

The idea that school psychologists' skills should be utilized to support student's mental health is not new. Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) described school psychologists as the "most highly trained mental health experts in schools." (p.488) Furthermore, Gilman and Gabriel (2004), found that school psychologists reported wanting to be more involved in individual and group counseling. The needs still exist, as a more recent study by Hill, Ohmstede and Mims (2012) found that the mental health needs of students were not being met. Given the amount of mental health needs of students in our schools, this seems like an easy and logical move for school psychologists as well as school systems.

According to NASP (2006) the existing mental health system is inadequate in its ability to meet the growing mental health needs of students. Further, when students with mental health problems do not receive the help they need, there are costly and negative outcomes including, academic and behavior problems, dropping out, and delinquency. According to NASP (2008) schools are the only mental health providers for nearly half of all children with emotional disorders. NASP explains that school psychologists are able to provide both comprehensive and cost-effective services in the schools because of their unique training of education, psychology, learning, child development and educational systems. NASP (2010) explained that more than any other school professional, school psychologists are uniquely positioned to address students' mental health needs. They provide comprehensive knowledge of human development process and psychopathology and having training to design, implement and monitor interventions that improve student outcomes. Given this information, the lack of support for school psychologists to provide mental health supports is not only disturbing but also, arguably, irresponsible.

Thus, NASP supports that mental health services in the schools are the most cost effective as well as efficacious. These efforts to advocate for school psychologists in the mental health role were also noted in the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools, a joint statement by several national associations including, American School Counselor Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of School Psychologists, National Association of School Resource Officers, National Association of Secondary School Principals and School Social Work Association of America.

It is not too surprising then to discover there has been an increased focus in the literature on school psychologists providing mental health services, especially in the last fifteen years (Alisic 2012, Allen 2011, Cowan and Paine 2013, Gilman and Gabriel 2004, Hanchon and Fernald 2013, Hill et al 2012, Maras, Thompson, Lewis, Thornburg and Hawks 2014, Perfect and Morris 2011, Quinn and Lee 2007, Splett and Maras 2011, Splett, Fowler, Weist and McDaniel 2013, Suldo, Friedrich and Michalowski 2010). However, the mental health services that school psychologists provide in the schools varies greatly.

Hanchon and Fernald (2013) found that while may school psychologists were trained to provide school based counseling services, over 40% of school psychologists did not offer them. The authors advocated for change by writing, "Given that schools serve as a primary setting for child mental health service delivery, the need for high-quality school-based mental health services is clear." (p.652)

Cowan and Paine (2013) explained, "Mental health, behavior, safety and learning are integral to one another. Yet only a fraction of students in need actually receive mental health services, and among those that do, the majority access those services in school." (p. 13)

Hill et al (2012) studied the need for mental health services in schools, the extent to which they are provided and the reported satisfaction of mental health services by administrators, counselors and school psychologists. They found confirmation that mental health services in the schools exist but some services are not being provided. They suggested that this revealed an opportunity to for school psychologists to be leaders

in the work of moving towards a "mental health model" which can better meet the needs of school students.

At a time when schools are trying to meet the mental health needs of students in ways they have never really attempted to before, Adelman and Taylor (2000) explain that schools simply haven't prioritized serving student's mental health in efficient and systemic ways. They wrote"…despite long-standing and widespread acknowledgement of need, relevant programs and services continue to be supplementary item on a school's agenda." They continued by describing schools as offering "only bare essentials" and that "primary prevention is only a dream." They described that in large districts, mental health clinicians, like school psychologists, counselors and social workers, function in relative isolation of each other resulting in "fragmentation that, in turn, results in waste and limited efficacy." They described mental health clinicians offering "an over-reliance on specialized services for individuals and small groups." They further described the systems, or lack thereof as working "against cohesiveness and maximizing results." They described the problem with providing services due to "marginalization and fragmentation' of services mostly due to programs and services that would address mental health being viewed as supplementary. They explained this is seen in the "lack of efforts to map, analyze and rethink how resources are allocated." In summary, the lack of responsiveness to student needs and reorganizing, rethinking and refocusing mental health services and programs has resulted in ineffective and inefficient practices, none of which are supporting large number of students.

In order to meet the mental health needs of students, Flaherty, Garrison, Waxman, Uris, Keys, Glass-Siegel and Weist (1998) called for "interdisciplinary collaboration." They suggested that tasks should be assigned to the school providers in a way that is aligned with their level of expertise thus reducing the likelihood of duplicating costs and limiting services. Given the training of school psychologists, and their reported under use in this area, this seems like an easy solution. However, that was written nearly twenty years ago and not much has changed.

Bronstein, Ball, Mellin, Wade-Mdivanian and Anderson-Butcher (2011) explained that services for children who have nonacademic issues continue to be insufficient even with multiple professionals from many disciplines hired by districts to meet these needs of their students.

Dowdy, Furlong, Raines, Bovery, Kauffman, Kamphaus and Murdock (2014) described the efforts towards identifying students with mental health needs in a preventative and comprehensive method versus reactionary a "more complete and efficient use of the skills of the school psychologist." (p.183)

Once again, a call for leadership is noted. Splett et al (2013) suggested that school psychologists should be leaders in the school mental work. They stated that school psychologists possess skills including but not limited to, "an understanding of child development, psycho-educational assessment, special education law, consultation methodology, program evaluation, and interventions." (p.251) The training school psychologists receive, then, clearly indicates a set of skills needed to support the mental health needs of students. This information, combined with the amount of research

indicating mental health needs are not being met indicates an obvious opportunity for schools to meet their student's needs through more effective use of school psychologists.

Interestingly, Agresta (2004) studied the perceptions of school psychologists, school counselors and school social workers in regards to twenty-one tasks as to what was and was not appropriate for each clinician group. Members from all three groups reported school psychologists are capable of all twenty-one tasks, including things like counseling, both individual and group, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, providing staff training, etc.

Despite the fact that mental health services fall within the professional role of school psychologists, the studies show that only a small proportion of school psychologist time is spent in this way. (Hanchon and Fernald 2013).

SCHOOL SAFETY

Over the last couple of decades, there has been increased attention towards school safety. As a result, much has been written about school safety in multiple contexts and their relationships to school psychologists. This includes, crisis response plans, suicide prevention, cyberbullying, advocacy for gay and straight students and the role of school psychologists, etc. (Adamson and Peacock 2007, Cowan and Paine 2013, Debski, Spadafore, Jacob, Poole and Hixson 2007, Diamanduros, Downs and Jenkins 2008, Dwyer, Osher, Maughan, Tuck and Patrick 2015, Murphy 2012, Nickerson and Zhe (2004).

Many studies indicate that school psychologists are often at least members, if not leaders, of the crisis response teams. Cowan and Paine (2013) explained that the broad

knowledge base of school psychologists make them key core members of school safety and crisis teams.

In a study by Adamson and Peacock (2007), school psychologists were found to be the most common members of the crisis team other than the school principal. Similarly, Nickerson and Zhe (2004) found that most psychologists are involved in the crisis response team as well as implementation of prevention and intervention strategies.

Debski et al (2007) surveyed school psychologists to learn about their role in suicide intervention. They found 93% of school psychologists reported some participation in suicide prevention and postvention activities. Of those 75% reported their role in suicide intervention was to serve on a crisis team. Several reported to be involved in additional pre and postvention activities as well.

In summary, the studies do indicate that there has been some change in practice. School psychologists are involved, to some degree, with mental health, RTI, PBIS and school safety work. However it's not the wide spread change that so many have hoped for and could positively impact schools. In spite of the research and progress, some barriers to implementing a full comprehensive and integrated service delivery model of school psychology services remains.

BARRIERS TO COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Grieger and Esposito's (1975) radical call for change suggested more time in consultation and prevention services were more effective than the current role, at that time, of the school psychologist. They suggested that the diagnostic role school psychologists were most involved in was too limited and ineffective, "We suggest a new

and predominant role for the school psychologist, believing…the diagnostical role too narrow, impractical, and unhelpful." (p. 277)

In spite of all the research since 1975 demonstrating the skills school psychologists possess and the opportunities for school staff to utilize them more comprehensively, there is still an overwhelming amount of researchers reporting that school psychologists are seen first and foremost as assessment experts and called on for assessments and report writing more than anything else. (Agresta, 2004, Gilman and Gabriel 2004, Meyers and Swerdlik 2003, Watkins, Crosby and Pearson, 2001)

Throughout the studies, there is a common theme as to what the barriers are to school psychologists providing comprehensive services. The results of many studies indicate the barriers come down to three things: perception of school psychologists as tester first, lack of time to offer the service, lack of expectation to offer the service and/or lack of complete understanding of the training and skills school psychologists possess.

Barrier #1: Perception of School Psychologists as Tester First

Watkins et al (2001) also studied the perceptions of school psychologists by general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators and support staff. They found that assessment, consultation, counseling, crisis intervention, special education input and support were all important roles of school psychologist but the most important was assessment.

Gilman and Gabriel (2004) found teachers and administrators wanted school psychologists to complete more assessment activities.

Thomas, Levinson, Orf and Pinciotti (1992) found that administrators most favored the role of school psychologists in assessment.

Barrier #2: Lack of Time to Offer the Service

Gonzalez et al (2004) surveyed teachers to better understand what influenced teachers' willingness to engage in consultation with school psychologists. They reported that there was a significant relationship between the number of hours per week the school psychologist was in the building and reported consultations. They further reported that many of the "spontaneous comments" written on the returned surveys were related to the amount of time the school psychologist is in the building and available.

Suldo et al (2010) also found that the insufficient time to serve the large caseloads school psychologists have result in school psychologists being unable to provide mental health services to students.

Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri and Goel (2011) studied teacher perceptions in supporting children's mental health in schools. They found that teachers felt school psychologists should play a greater role in screening, conducting assessments and teaching social emotional lessons. In other words, assessment was the priority role for school psychologists.

An international study by Farrell et al (2005) found some promising information regarding the perception of school staff of school psychologist time. In the United States, they found that 76% of teachers report wanting more school psychologist time. One of the participants recognized what is either a lack of adequate time or misuse of school psychologists, or maybe both, by writing, "It's too bad they only have time for testing

students-working with students in other areas would be a good use of their time." (539) The authors concluded that the statements from the open ended questionnaire indicate that there is a sense of frustration on the part of teachers that the school psychologists time is dominated with activities related to testing when they should be more able to spend time working with students and teachers.

Peterson, Waldron and Paulson (1998) wrote a paper investigating why teachers turn to school psychologists for support and in what capacity. They found that teachers hold a narrow view of school psychologists' services which is likely due to limited time in buildings.

In the study by Debski et al (2007), of the school psychologists who reported to have no role in suicide prevention and postvention, the respondents indicated they lacked adequate time to do so.

Santiago, Kataoka, Forness and Miranda (2014) analyzed the mental health services offered by school psychologists and found that in spite of the overwhelming need to address the mental health needs of students, the clinicians reported their work loads were so high it frequently prevented them from doing the high level of work they needed to do to make a positive impact on the students they serve.

In a study by Graves et al (2014), the psychologists surveyed in this study reported that some of the reasons they worked in more traditional roles were due to lack of resources and lack of administrative support.

Hanchon and Fernald (2013) found one of the reasons school psychologists did not offer counseling services was due to lack of time.

Barrier #3: Lack of Expectation to Offer the Service and/or Lack of Understanding of Training

Suldo et al (2010) reported that that lack of support from administration, teachers and others limit their involvement in mental health roles including counseling.

Gilman and Medway (2007) found that teachers, both special education and general education, do not often view school psychologists as someone who provides counseling services or as a role school psychologists should have.

Suldo et al (2010) found that one barrier school psychologists have to fulfilling the roles for which they are trained is a lack of teacher understanding of how school psychologists are trained to provide mental health services. The researchers found insufficient support from the department and district administration which school psychologists perceived a lack of support for providing psychotherapeutic services.

Graves et al (2014) reported that school psychologists worked in more traditional roles due to lack of understanding of school psychologists training.

This was also found by Hanchon and Fernald (2013) who reported that school staff, administrators in particular, did not view their role as a school psychologist to include counseling.

The role of a school psychologist as counselor in Hanchon and Fernald's study yielded some interesting results. On one hand, they found a majority of school psychologists provide some school-based counseling to students, the most common type being individual, then group, and lastly crisis response. On the other hand, they found that even though over 40% of school psychologists indicated they had counseling training

they did not offer that service because they either lacked time or others did not perceive this as a service the school psychologists should offer.

This lack of expectation on the part of school psychologists can be frustrating. They quoted one participant who responded, "My talents are wasted. I am an excellent counselor, but that is not what they us to spend our time doing. Testing, report writing, chair meetings, and writing IEP's is what they want." (p. 666)

Gilman and Gabriel (2004) found that a majority of school psychologists and teachers wanted more individual and group counseling by school psychologists, yet, less than half of the administrators agreed with that. They also found a majority of school psychologists and teachers wanted school psychologists to be involved with children in regular education but less than 40% of administrators wanted this.

Hanchon and Fernald (2013) found the reason school psychologists were not engaged in providing counseling services was because these services were provided by others in the district so there was no administrative expectation to provide those services. In fact, they found that a majority of school psychologists not providing counseling services reported this was due to school counselors and other mental health professionals trying to keep school psychologists out of providing these services.

It seems fairly clear why school psychologists are still often utilized in a narrow role in schools. The reason comes down to lack of understanding by school staff as to what their trainings are/roles could be as well as lack of support either in resources, time, or role expectation. Gilman and Gabriel (2004) explained their exists a "fundamental

difference….between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of what school psychology is and what school psychologists should do in their daily practice." (p.281)

Meyers and Swerdlik (2003) described the problem in this way, "Because of the emphasis on assessment, the services of school psychologists are often marginalized." (p.258)

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

There was one study where a school district made significant changes to how they utilized school psychologists resulting in a more comprehensive service delivery model. Nelson et al (2006) studied the Greeley-Evans Public School, school psychology model. In this school district they reorganized to better serve the mental health and social/emotional needs of students. The district recognized the most comprehensive training was from that of a school psychologist so they combined the roles of school psychologist and school social worker and in some cases also combined the role of school counselor into one position, the position of the school psychologist. This allowed each elementary building to have a full time mental health professional. Although the school psychologist was required to take on administrative roles as well as comprehensive school psychological roles, the implementation was overall a success. The results indicated that increasing the number of direct service hours a school psychologist is in a building, may result in reduction of referrals to special education which in turn increases the overall cost effectiveness of this type of service delivery model.

The steps taken in the Greeley-Evans do not seem to have been replicated, in spite of the enormous amount of research on how school psychologists could be serving

schools. There is a large amount of research indicating that school administrators are a main reason why school psychologists are used for a very narrow purpose, thus it seems important that a study be completed to better understand what administrators know and don't know about school psychologists and what might be done to change their understanding.

The purpose of this study, then, is to identify principal's perceptions of the roles, skills and preparation of school psychologists.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

Throughout the country, school psychologists are often the most highly-trained staff in the buildings, requiring a minimum of a masters degree but more often a specialist or doctorate degree is required to practice as a school psychologist. According to a study by Curtis et al (2004), 32.9% of school psychologists held a masters degree, 34.9% held a specialist degree, and 32.4% held a doctorate degree. In spite of their high level of training, it is not uncommon for their service delivery to be very limited. Often they do not practice in a way that fully utilizes their scope and breadth of training, and instead spent most of their time in special education evaluations. (Curtis et al 1999, Farrell et al 2005, Graves et al 2014, Hosp and Reschly 2002 and Stoiber and Vanderwood 2008)

Many schools do not utilize school psychologists in a way that is most effective. Further, schools are reporting students have unmet needs that could be addressed by school psychologists. (Hill et al, 2012)

The purpose of this study, then, is to collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to better understand the work of school psychologists in the schools from the principals' point of view. The findings will have implications for school psychologists, school psychologist training programs, principals, district leaders and educational leadership training programs.

Mixed Methods Research

The study was a mixed-methods design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), "Mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research) (p. 12) In addition, a mixed method design was used because, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), "…the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself." (p. 8) They further stated that a mixed methods research study, "… provides more evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative alone." (p. 12)

Crewsell and Plano Clark (2011) described six mix methods research designs. They are:

1. convergent parallel design,
2. explanatory sequential design,
3. exploratory sequential design,
4. embedded design,
5. transformative design, and,
6. multiphase design (p. 69)

In this study an explanatory sequential design was utilized. Creswell and Plano Clark described this research design as:

> The explanatory sequential design occurs in two distinct interactive phases. This design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, which has the priority for addressing the study's questions. This first phase is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from the results of the first, quantitative phase. The researcher interprets how the qualitative results help to explain the initial quantitative results. (p. 71)

The first phase of the study involved collecting quantitative data through a survey distributed to principals at the elementary and secondary school levels throughout the

Midwestern United States. The participants for the second phase of the study were identified through participation in the first phase.

The second phase of the study involved collecting qualitative data through individual interviews. The participants were selected from the first phase (survey) through their answers to the survey questions.

Phase 1—Quantitative.

Survey, participants and sampling plan. The survey was created based on a review of the literature concerning the roles of school psychologists (Appendix B). The survey included 33 questions and was generally completed in less than 10 minutes. The questions include seven demographic questions. Seventeen questions addressed the roles of the school psychologist. Each of the seventeen questions asked about specific roles school psychologist fulfill to meet specific school needs. One question asked about 14 different role school psychologists fulfill in meeting the academic achievement needs of students. The next question asked about 15 different roles school psychologists fulfill to promote positive behavior and mental health. Another question asked about 11 different roles school psychologists full to me support diverse learners. The next question asked about 8 different roles school psychologists fulfill to support safe, positive and school climates. Another question asked about 8 different roles school psychologists fulfill to strengthen family and school partnerships. One question asked about 10 different roles school psychologists play to improve school-wide assessment and accountability. There was one question that asked about 13 different skills school psychologists have. The role

descriptions and skills are based on the knowledge and skills that school psychologists should have, according to NASP (2014).

The next two questions surveyed if the principal feels he or she has sufficient school psychologist time and if unmet needs exist in their building. The next question asked for the principal to identify the top three priorities for the school psychologist's role if there were additional school psychology time from a list of choices. One question surveyed the principals perspective as to who was the most comprehensively trained mental health professional in the school. The final two questions solicited the principal's participation in a follow up interview, phase 2 of the study.

In accordance with Fowler (2014), who explained, that closed questions are "usually a more satisfactory way of creating data," all of the questions on the survey were closed except for the last question that solicits participants' contact information if they choose to participate in a follow-up interview (p. 88). According to Fowler (2014) there are four reasons for using closed questions. They are:

1. The respondents can more reliably answer questions
2. The researchers can more reliably interpret the meaning of the answers
3. It increases the likelihood there will be respondents and;
4. It is easy for participants to answers when given choices.

Fowler (2014), suggested there are several advantages to an internet survey including they are low cost, quick return and adequate time for the respondents to provide thoughtful answers. Based on the efficiency of an internet survey, a web-based survey system, Qualtrics, was used.

The survey link was sent to K-12 principals in the Midwestern United States (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas). Principal names and email addresses were obtained through lists of principals. Email invitations were sent to principals during the spring of 2016.

Phase 2—Qualitative.

Participants and sampling. The participants in the second phase of the study, the qualitative phase, were selected from the population in the first phase, the quantitative phase.

In selecting the number of participants for phase 2, the researcher followed guidance of Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), and focused on quality not quantity.

> In terms of the number of participants, rather than select a large number of people or sites, the qualitative researcher identifies and recruits a small number that will provide in-depth information about the central phenomenon or concept being explored in the study. (p. 174)

There were 46 principals who indicated they would participate in the follow-up interviews, however, 26 responded to requests to schedule the interview. Most of the participants in phase 2 were from Nebraska (n=12). There were 7 from Minnesota, 3 from Iowa, and 1 each from Oklahoma, South Dakota and Texas.

During each interview the participants were reminded that confidentiality would be maintained and informed consent letters were signed by the participants.

The second phase of the study provided an opportunity to gather a deeper understanding of the perceptions of principals about school psychologists and the roles they fill and skills they have. The interviews were conducted using a semistructured protocol of open-ended response questions (Appendix D).

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and returned to the participants to allow them to check for accuracy. This strategy is called "member-checking. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011),

> Member-checking is a frequently used approach, in which the investigator takes Summaries of the findings (e.g., case studies, major themes, theoretical model) back to key participants in the study and asks them whether the findings are an accurate reflection of their experiences. (p. 211)

The form utilized for participants to review the transcripts is included in the appendix (Appendix E).

I received 15 out of 26 approved transcript verifications back from the principals who participated in the interviews.

Data analysis. Manual coding was used to analyze the data for the qualitative phase of the study. Creswell and Plano Clark explained that,

> Transforming qualitative data into quantitative data involves reducing themes or codes to numeric information, such as dichotomous categories. (p. 231)

Descriptive coding was chosen as the best way to identify the themes from the interviews (Saldana, 2013).

Mixed methods data analysis. The data collected from each phase, both quantitative and qualitative were analyzed separately.

Research Questions

- What roles and skills do principals believe school psychologists have?
- What are the differences between principals who have a strong understanding of school psychologists' roles and skills and those who do not?
- What factors influence how principals utilize school psychologists in their schools?

- What barriers exist to using school psychologists in a comprehensive service delivery way.

Summary

In the first phase of the study, quantitative data was collected through a survey distributed to elementary and secondary principals throughout the Midwest. Participants were identified for the second phase by completing the survey and volunteering to participate in a follow-up interview. In the second phase of the study, qualitative data was collected through interviews.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF QUANTATIVE DATA

Introduction

The mixed-methods study was conducted in two phases. The methodology for the study and participants were described in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, the quantitative phase is presented. The quantitative data was collected in phase one through online surveys sent to principals in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In order to better understand what roles school psychologists fulfilled, from the perspective of principals, and determine what barriers exist to using school psychologists in a comprehensive manner, principals were asked to complete a 33 question survey based on the roles the National Association of School Psychologists indicates school psychologists are trained to fulfill.

Survey

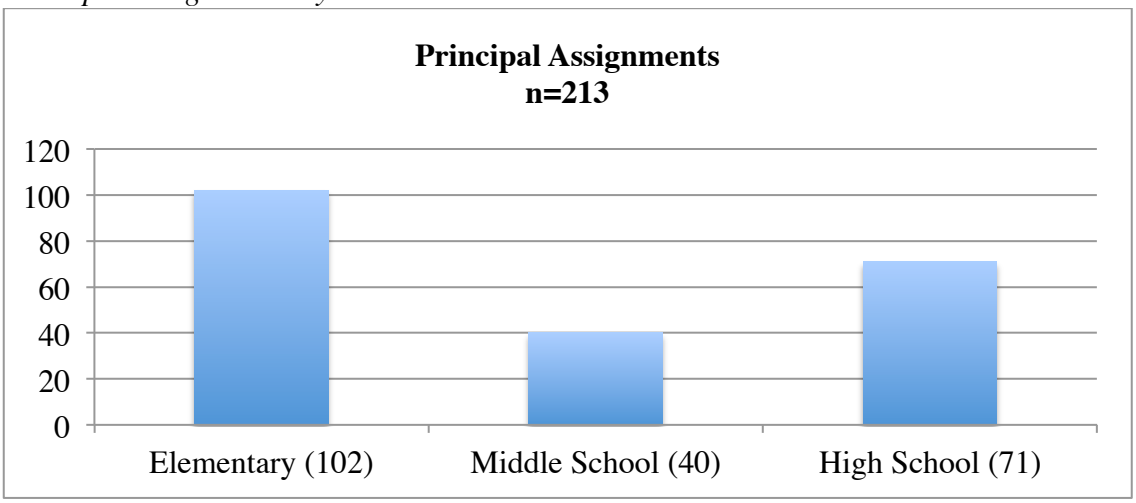
The 33-question on-line survey was sent to principals in the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. There were a total of 213 respondents to the survey.

Participants

Of the 213 respondents, 102 of them were principals at elementary schools, 40 were principals at middle schools and 71 principals worked at the high school level.

Figure 1

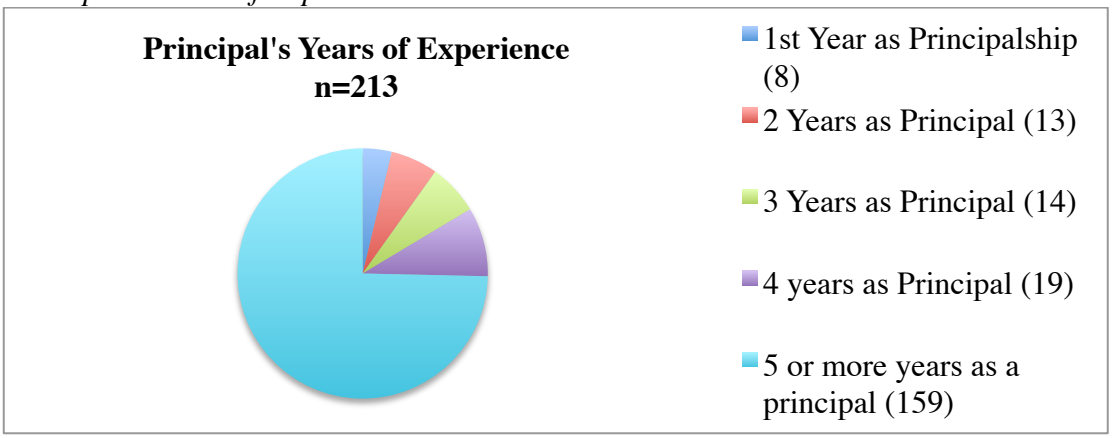
Principal Assignments by Level



Most of those responding had 5 or more years of experience (n=159, 74.65%). However a total of 8 or 3.76% respondents were in their first year of principalship. Thirteen or 6.10% were in their second year of principalship. There were 14 or 6.57% who had served as principal for three years. Finally there were 19 or 8.92% who had been a principal for four years.

Figure 2

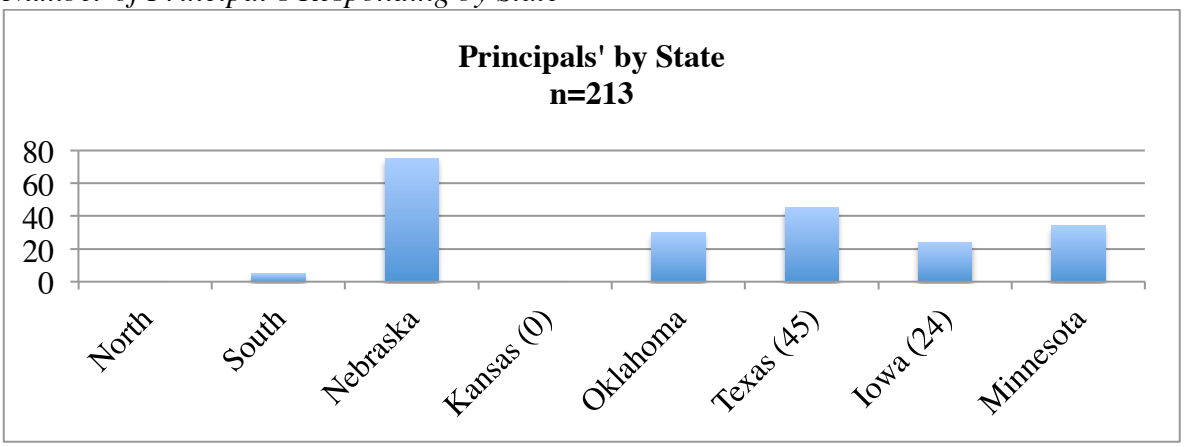
Principal's Years of Experience



The greatest number of respondents came from the state of Nebraska. There were 75 (35.21%) respondents from Nebraska. There other states with the largest number of respondents were Texas (n=37, 21.13%) Minnesota (n=34, 15.96%), Oklahoma (n=30, 14.08%) and Iowa (n=24, 11.27%). There were five (2.35%) respondents from the state of South Dakota. No principals responded to the survey in either North Dakota or Kansas.

Figure 3

Number of Principal's Responding by State



Most of the participants were principals in buildings of 700 or less students. Fifty-five or 25.82% of the participants indicated their building size was less than 300. There were 61 or 28.64% who were principals of buildings that enrolled 301-500 students. Fifty-eight, or 27.23% reported their building size was 501-700. The remaining principals reported to serve buildings of 701-900 (N=8, 3.76%), 901-1100 (N=5, 2.35%), 1101-1300 (N=5, 2.35%), and 1301-1500 (N=4, 1.88%) and seven principals reported their building enrollments were more than 1500 students.

School Psychologists FTE & Funding Source

Principals overwhelming reported that special education dollars funded the position of the school psychologist (N=186, 87.32%) where as only 27, or 12.68% reported general education dollars to pay for the school psychologist position.

Most principals reported that they had a school psychologist to support their student and building needs "only when called upon." (n=87, 40.85%). Interestingly, 31 reported to have a school psychologist one day a week, 31 reported to have a school psychologist 2 days per week and 31 reported to have a school psychologist 5 days per week. (14.55% of the respondents for each). There were 26 (12.21%) who reported to have a school psychologist 3 days per week and 7 (3.29%) who reported to have a school psychologist 4 days per week.

Perceived School Psychologist Roles by Principals

Principals were asked about the roles school psychologists filled in their schools. The roles that principals were asked about are the roles that the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) reports are roles that school psychologists should fulfill under the headings of academic achievement, promote positive behavior and mental health, support diverse learners, create safe, positive school climates, strengthen family and school partnerships, and improve school-wide assessment and accountability.

Then, if the principal indicated the school psychologist did not fulfill that role in their school, they were then asked to identify the barrier that prevents the school psychologist from fulfilling that role. The choices offered for barriers were inadequate time for them to engage in that activity, someone else fulfills that role, the school does

not have a need for school psychologists to fulfill this role or the principal does not think the school psychologist has training to fulfill this role.

Academic Achievement

Overall, most principals reported that school psychologists support schools and students in their work by supporting academic achievement. The total number of

Table 1

Total Number of Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived Role of School Psychologists in Improving Academic Achievement

School Psychologists Improve Academic Achievement By:	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Conducting psychological assessments	207	87%
Conducting academic assessments	202	70%
Interpreting student data	201	82%
Reducing inappropriate referrals to special education	201	66%
Collecting student data	200	70%
Monitoring student progress	200	56%
Collecting classroom data	199	45%
Managing student behavior	199	43%
Promoting student motivation	199	40%
Interpreting classroom data	199	46%
Promoting student engagement	198	34%
Individualizing interventions	198	63%
Individualizing instruction	196	28%
Managing classroom behavior	195	25%

responses for each component of "academic achievement" ranged from a low of 196 to a high of 207.

Most principals reported that school psychologists improved academic achievement by conducting psychological assessments (n=181, 87.44%). Of those who reported the school psychologist did not support students in this way, 19 (67.86%) reported that school psychologists did not fulfill this duty because they lacked adequate FTE to engage in this activity, 5 (17.86%) reported that someone else fulfills this role, (3.57%) reported that it was not a need for their school and 3 (10.71%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Most principals also reported that school psychologists improved academic achievement by conducting academic assessments (n=141, 69.80%). Of those who reported that school psychologists did not improve academic achievement through conducting academic assessments, there were 7 (10.45%) that reported that school psychologists lacked sufficient FTE to engage in this activity. Most reported that someone else in the school fulfills this role (n=57, 85.07%) and one (1.49%) reported this was not a need in their school and two who reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Just under half of the principals reported that school psychologists improved academic achievement by managing student behavior (n=86, 43.22%). Of those who reported that school psychologists do support academic achievement by managing student behavior, 25 (20.83%) reported that school psychologists lacked adequate FTE to fulfill this role. Most reported that someone else in their building fulfills this role (n=89,

74.17%), two (1.57%) reported that this was not a need in their school and 4 (3.33%) reported school psychologists do not have this type of training.

Only a quarter of principals reported that school psychologists improved academic achievement by managing classroom behavior (n=49, 25.13%). The barriers that were reported for school psychologists not supporting academics by managing classroom behavior were lack of adequate FTE (n=36, 22.93%), someone else does this in our school (n=111, 70.70%, and this was not a need in our school (n=4, 2.55%). The final reported barrier was that school psychologists were not trained for this (n-6, 3.82%).

Less than half of principals reported that school psychologists improve academic achievement by promoting student motivation (n=79, 39.70%). Of those, nearly a third reported that school psychologists lacked sufficient FTE to offer this service (n=38, 30.40%). Most reported that someone else offers this service (n=81, 64.80%). Less than 1% reported this was not a need for their school (n=1, .80%) and 5 reported school psychologists did not have training for this (4.00%).

Principals also reported that school psychologist have a somewhat minimal role in supporting academic achievement by promoting student engagement (n=68, 34.34%). There were 38 who reported that school psychologists lacked adequate FTE to engage in this activity (28.79%). Again, most reported that someone else fulfilled this responsibility (n=88, 66.67%). There were six who reported that school psychologists did not have training for this (4.55%) and there was any principal who reported a barrier to using their school psychologist in this way was because it was not a need in their school.

More than half of principals reported that schools psychologists supported academic achievement by monitoring student progress (n=111, 55.50%). For those that reported the school psychologist did not fulfill this role, there were 28 (29.47%), who reported the school psychologist lacked adequate FTE to fulfill this role, 66 (69.47%) reported that someone else in the school fulfills this role and one (1.05%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this. There were no principals who reported that this was not a need in their school.

Most principals reported that school psychologists support academic achievement by collecting student data (n=140, 70.00%). For those that did not report their school psychologist improved academic achievement by collecting student data, 15 (23.81%) reported their school psychologist lacked sufficient time to engage in this activity. The most frequently reported barrier was that someone else in their school fulfilled this role (n-47, 74.60%). There was one principal who reported that school psychologists do not have training for this role (1.59%). There were no principals who reported this was not a need in their school.

Less than half of principals reported that school psychologists supported academic achievement by collecting classroom data (n=89, 44.72%). There were 21 principals (18.42%) who reported that the barrier for school psychologists fulfilling this role was lack of time. Most of them reported their barrier was that someone else fulfilled this role (n=89, 78.07%). There was one (0.88%) who reported this was not a need in their school and 3 (2.63%) who reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Most principals reported that school psychologists support academic achievement by interpreting student data (n=164, 81.59%). There were seven who reported insufficient time for their school psychologist to fulfill this role (16.28%). There were 34 who said someone else in the school fulfills this role (79.07%) and two who reported that school psychologists do not have training for this (4.65%). There were not any principals who reported this was not a need for their school.

There were 91 principals who reported that school psychologists supported the academic achievement of students by interpreting classroom data (45.73%). Of those who reported the school psychologist did not fill this role, 21 (18.92%) reported they school psychologist did not have time to fill this role, 87 (78.38%) reported someone else fulfills this role and 3 (2.70%) reported that the school psychologist does not have training for this. There were not any principals who reported this was not a need in their building.

A majority of principals reported that school psychologists supported academic achievement by reducing inappropriate referrals to special education (n=132, 65.67%). For the principals who reported their school psychologist did not fulfill this role, 23 (32.39%) reported the school psychologist did not have sufficient time to fill this role, 39 (54.93%) reported that someone else fulfilled this role, 6 reported that this was not a need for their school (8.45%) and 3 (4.23%) reported that school psychologists were not trained for this.

Principals reported that school psychologists support academic achievement by individualizing instruction 27.55% of their time (n=54). Of those who reported that

school psychologists did not fulfill this role, 29 (20.00%) reported that school psychologists did not have time to fill this role. Most, 110, reported that someone else in the school fulfills this role (75.86%) and six (4.14%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this. No one reported that this was not a need for their school.

Principals reported that most school psychologist supported academic achievement by individualizing interventions (n=125, 63.13%). There were 21 who reported the school psychologist does not fulfill this role (27.27%). The most frequently reported barrier was that someone else fulfills this role (n=54, 70.13%). There were 2 who reported that school psychologists are not trained for this (2.60%). There were no principals who reported this was not a need for their school

Positive Behavior and Mental Health

Overall, most principals reported that school psychologists had some evaluative role in positive behavior and mental health. Direct service to children roles, i.e. counseling, were reported in much smaller numbers. The total number of responses for this set of questions ranged from a low of 189 to a high of 197.

Most principals reported that school psychologists promote positive behavior and mental health by assessing student emotional needs (n=167, 85.64%). Of those who indicated their school psychologist did not fill this role, 11 (30.56%) reported there was insufficient time for them to fill this role. Most of them, 19, reported the barrier was that someone else filled this role (52.78%). There were 3 (8.33%) who reported that school psychologists are not trained for this and no principals reported this was not a need.

Table 2

Total Number Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived Role of School Psychologists in Promoting Positive Behavior and Mental Health

School Psychologists Promote Positive Behavior and Mental Health By:	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Assessing student behavioral needs	197	197 (88%)
Assessing student emotional needs	195	195 (86%)
Providing individual counseling	195	195 (33%)
Providing group counseling	193	193 (21%)
Facilitating problem solving instructional groups	193	193 (25%)
Facilitating anger management instructional groups	193	193 (19%)
Promoting positive peer relationships	193	193 (34%)
Facilitating conflict resolution instructional groups	192	192 (19%)
Making referrals to community services provided in schools	191	191 (42%)
Helping coordinate community services provided in schools	191	191 (32%)
Improving student communication	190	190 (29%)
Reinforcing positive coping skills	190	190 (46%)
Reinforcing resilience	190	190 (43%)
Promoting social problem solving	189	189 (49)%

Similarly, most principals reported that school psychologists promote positive behavior and mental health by assessing student behavioral needs (n=174, 88.32%). For those principals who reported their school psychologist did not fulfill this role, 8 (27.59%) reported they had inadequate time to do so. (27.59%). There were 17 who

reported someone else fulfilled this role (58.62%), one (3.45%) reported school psychologists are not trained for this. No one reported this was not a need in their school.

Only about one-third of school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by providing individual counseling, based on principal reports (n=64, 32.82%). For those whose school psychologist did not fulfill this role, 36 (27.07%) reported they lacked the time to do so. Most of them reported someone else fulfilled this role (n=92, 68.42%), two (1.50%) reported this was not a need in their school and 2 (1.50%) reported their school psychologist was not trained for this.

Principals reported that even fewer school psychologists offered group counseling to promote positive behavior and mental health. (n=40, 20.73%). Principals who did not utilize their school psychologist for group counseling reported that they did not because there was insufficient time to do so (n=39, 25.59%), someone else fulfills this role (n=104, 67.97%), it is not a need in our school (n=4, 2.61%) and school psychologists do not have training for this (n=3, 1.96%).

Principals reported that about a quarter of their school psychologists facilitate problem solving instructional group in order to promote positive behavior and mental health (n=47, 24.35%). For those who do not have a school psychologist fulfilling this role, 44 (30.14%) lacked the time for the school psychologist to fulfill this role, 96 (65.73%) reported that someone else in their school fulfilled this role, 3 (2.05%) reported this was not a need in their building and 3 (2.05%) reported school psychologists do not have this training.

Principals reported that school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by facilitating anger management groups the least frequently of all the roles they could fulfill in this area (n=37, 19.17%). There were 46 principals who reported a lack of time (29.49%), 102 (65.38%) who reported someone else does this, 4 (2.56%) who reported this was not a need in their school and 4 (2.56%) who reported school psychologist do not have training for this.

Principals also reported that school psychologists infrequently promoted positive behavior and mental health by facilitating conflict resolution instructional groups (n=37, 19.27%). The principals reported the barriers were lack of time (n=46, 29.49%), someone else does this (n=103, 66.03%), this is not a need for their school (n=3, 1.92%) and school psychologists do not have training for this (n=4, 2.56%).

Principals reported that their school psychologists promote positive peer relationships in order to promote positive behavior and mental health about a third of the time (n=65, 33.68%). For those who do not have a school psychologist fulfilling this role, 31 lacked the time for the school psychologist to fulfill this role (23.48%), 95 (72.97%) reported that someone else in their school fulfilled this role, 2 (1.52%) reported this was not a need in their building and 4 (3.03%) who reported school psychologists do not have this training.

Principals also reported that school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by promoting social problem solving just under half of the time. (n=89, 47.09%). The principals reported the barriers were lack of time (n=25, 24.27%), someone else does this (n=75, 72.82%), and school psychologists do not have training for

this (n=3, 2.91%). There were no principals who reported that this was not a need in their school.

According to the survey, 81 principals reported that school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by making referrals to community services (42.41%). For those principals who reported their school psychologist did not fill this role, they reported lack of time was a barrier (n=14, 12.50%), someone else does this (n=94, 83.93%), this is not a need in our school (n=1, 0.89%) and school psychologists do not have training for this (n=3, 2.68%).

Principals reported that 61 school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by helping coordinate community services provided in schools (31.94%). There were 23 principals who reported that lack of time was a barrier (17.42%). Most principals indicated that someone else does this (n=103, 78.03%), two (1.52%) reported that this was not a need in their school and 4 (3.03%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

About a third of principals reported that their school psychologist promoted positive behavior and mental health by improving student communication (n=56, 29.47%). Of those reporting their school psychologist did not fill this role, 25 (18.52%) reported they lacked time to do so. Most reported someone else fills this role (n-101, 74.81%), 6 (4.44%) reported that this was not a need in their school, 3 (2.22%) reported that school psychologists were not trained in this way.

Eighty-four principals reported that school psychologists promoted positive behavior and mental health by improving student social skills (44.44%). Those who did

not use their school psychologist in this way reported that there was not enough time for the school psychologist to fill this role (n=21, 19.63%), someone else fills this role (n=84, 78.50%), or the school psychologist is not trained for this (n=2, 1.87%). There were no principals who reported this was not a need in their school.

Just under half of the principals reported that their school psychologist promoted positive behavior and mental health by reinforcing positive coping skills (n=88, 46.42%). The principals reported that barriers were lack of time (n=24, 22.86%), someone else fills this role (n=79, 75.25%) and school psychologists do not have training for this (n=2, 1.90%). No principal reported this was not a need for their school.

Finally, there were 81 principals who reported that their school psychologist promoted positive behavior and mental health by reinforcing resilience (42.63%). For those who reported it was not a role filled by their school psychologist, 25 (22.73%) reported the barrier was lack of FTE, 82 (74.55%) reported someone else filled this role 3 (2.73%) principals reported school psychologists were not trained for this and there were not any principals who reported this was not a need for their school.

Supporting Diverse Learners

Most principals reported that their school psychologist filled a role, either in assessment or planning special education programs, for diverse learners, but beyond that, the roles school psychologists filled to support diverse learners occurred about half of the time or less. The total number of responses for this set of questions ranged from a low of 183 to a high of 189.

Table 3

Total Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived Role of School Psychologists in Supporting Diverse Learners

School Psychologists Support Diverse Learners By:	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Assessing diverse learning needs	189	67%
Effectively communicating with parents about student progress	189	49%
Planning appropriate IEP programs for students with disabilities	188	71%
Providing culturally responsive services to students from diverse backgrounds	188	30%
Providing culturally responsive services to families from diverse backgrounds	188	27%
Monitoring student progress	188	53%
Adjusting classroom facilities to improve student engagement (e.g. plans locations	187	28%
Modifying and adapting curricula and instruction	185	16%
Supporting social-emotional learning	185	50%
Adjusting classroom routines to improve student engagement	184	32%
Adjusting classroom facilities to improve student learning (e.g. plans locations	184	28%
Providing crisis intervention services	184	46%
Adjusting classroom routines to improve student learning	183	35%
Implementing school-wide positive behavioral supports	183	28%
Providing crisis prevention services	183	39%

A majority of principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by assessing the diverse learning needs of students (n=127, 67.20%). For those who reported their school psychologist did not fulfill this role, 13 reported their school psychologist did not have sufficient time to engage in this work (20.00%). Most reported

someone else fulfilled this role (n=49, 75.38%). One principal reported this was not a need in his or her school. (1.54%). There were two principals who reported that school psychologists are not trained for this (3.08%).

Most of the principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by planning appropriate IEP programs for students with disabilities (n=134, 71.28%). There were five principals who reported their school psychologist did not fulfill this role due to lack of time (8.33%). The most frequently reported barrier to this role for school psychologists was that someone else fulfilled this role (n=53, 88.33%). Two reported that school psychologists do have training for this (3.33%). There were no principals who reported a barrier was that this was not a need in their school.

There were 57 principals who reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by providing culturally responsive services to students from diverse backgrounds (30.32%). For those who did not utilize their school psychologist in this way, 20 reported that their school psychologist did not have time to enage in this (15.27%), 82 reported that someone else fulfills this role (62.60%), 16 reported this was not a need in their school (12.21%) and 13 reported that school psychologists are not trained to provide this service (9.92%).

About a quarter of the principals reported that school psychologists provided culturally responsive services to families from diverse backgrounds (n=51, 27.13%). For those who reported that school psychologists did not fulfill this role, 23 reported the school psychologist did not have time to engage in this (16.43%), 90 reported someone

else fulfills this role (64.29%), 15 reported that this was not a need in their school (10.71%) and 12 reported that school psychologists did not have this training (8.75%).

About half of the principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by monitoring student progress (n=99, 52.66%). For the principals who reported that their school psychologist did not fill this role, 13 reported their school psychologist did not have time to do so (14.44%), 76 reported someone else filled this role (84.44%) and one reported school psychologists do not have training for this (1.11%). There were no principals who reported that a barrier was that it was not a need in their school.

Ninety-two principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by effectively communicating with parents about student progress (n=92, 48.68%). There were 12 principals who reported their school psychologist did not fulfill this role due to insufficient time (12.37%). There were 84 principals who reported that someone else fulfilled this role (86.60%). One principal reported that school psychologists are not trained for this. There were no principals who reported this was not a need for this in their school.

Only 29 principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by modifying and adaptying curricula and instruction (15.68%). For those who reported their school psychologist did not fill those roles, 16 (10.19%) reported there was insufficient time for the school psychologists to fulfill this role, 135 reported someone else filled this role (85.99%) and 6 who reported that school psychologists were not trained for this role (3.82%).

There were 53 principals who reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by adjusting classroom facilities to improve student engagement (28.34%). Of those who reported school psychologists did not fulfill this role, 17 reported a barrier of insufficient time (12.78%), 113 reported a barrier that someone else fulfills this role (84.96%), one reported this was not a need for their school (0.75%) and 2 reported the barrier was that school psychologists were not trained for this (1.50%).

About a third of the principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by adjusting classroom routines to improve student engagement (n=58, 31.52%). There were 13 principals who reported a barrier of insufficient time (10.16%), 111 who reported that someone else filled this role (86.72%), one who reported this was not a need in their school (0.78%) and 3 who reported that school psychologists lacked training for this role (2.34%).

There were 52 principals who reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by adjusting classroom facilities to improve student learning (28.26%) Nineteen principals reported their school psychologist lacked adequate time to fill this role (14.18%). Most principals reported the barrier to using school psychologists to fulfill this role was that someone else filled this role (n=110, 82.09%). Two reported this was not a need in their school (1.49%) and 3 reported that school psychologists lacked this type of training (2.24%).

Sixty-four principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by adjusting classroom routines to improve student learning (34.97%). For those who reported that school psychologists did not fill this role, 13 reported a barrier of

insufficient time (10.74%). Most reported that school psychologists were not used for this because someone else filled this role (n=104, 85.95%). Two reported this was not a need for this school (1.65%) and two reported that school psychologists are not trained for this (1.65%).

Less than a third of the principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by implementing school-wide positive behavioral supports (n=51, 27.87%). Of those who did not utilize their school psychologist to implement positive behavior supports, 17 reported the school psychologist did not have time to fill this role (13.18%), 103 reported that someone else fills this role (70.84%, 5 reported this was not a need in their school (3.88%) and 4 reported school psychologists are not trained for this (3.10%).

Seventy-one principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by providing crisis prevention services (38.80%). Thirteen principals reported that school psychologists did not fill this role because of insufficient time (11.21%). There were 95 who reported that someone else filled this role (81.90%). Three reported this was not a need in their school (2.59%) and 5 reported that school psychologists were not trained for this (4.31%).

Eighty-five principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by providing crisis intervention services (46.20%). There were 15 principals who reported that school psychologists lacked time to provide this service (14.85%). Seventy-nine reported that someone else filled this role (78.22%). Three reported that it was not a

need in their school (2.97%) and four reported school psychologists were not trained for this (3.96%).

Finally, just under half of the principals reported that school psychologists support diverse learners by supporting social-emotional learning (n=92, 49.73%). Sixteen principals reported the barrier was lack of sufficient school psychology time (16.84%). The most frequent barrier was that someone else filled this role (n=73, 76.84%). Four reported this was not a need in their school (4.21%) and two reported that school psychologists are not trained for this (2.11%).

Creating Safe, Positive School Climates

Overall, principals reported that school psychologists were involved in creating safe and positive school climates about 50% of less of the time. The total number of responses for this set of questions ranged from a low of 183 to a high of 185.

Just over half of the principals reported that school psychologists create safe, positive school climates by identifying at-risk students (n=100, 54.35%). There were 9 (10.71%) principals who reported that school psychologists were unable to fill this role due to lack of time, 72 (85.71) reported this role was filled by someone else, one (1.19%) who reported this was not a need in their school and 2 (2.38%) who reported school psychologists were not trained for this.

About a third of the principals reported that school psychologists create safe, positive school climates by identifying school vulnerabilities (n=59, 31.89%). There were 22 (18.18%) principals who reported a barrier to using their school psychologist in this way as inadequate time to engage in this, 92 (76.03%) reported someone else fulfills

Table 4

Total Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived School Psychologist's Role in Creating Safe and Positive School Climates

School Psychologists Create Safe, Positive School Climates	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Identifying school vulnerabilities	185	32%
Implementing and promoting positive discipline	185	28%
Supporting Social Emotional Learning	185	49.73%
Identifying at-risk students	184	4%
Preventing bullying and other forms of violence (e.g. fighting, weapons)	184	20%
Providing Crisis Intervention Services	184	46.20%
Providing Crisis Prevention Services	183	38.80%
Implementing School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports	183	27.87%

this role, 2 (1.65%) who reported that this was not a need in their school and 5 (4.13%) reported that school psychologists are not trained for this.

About 20% of the principals reported that school psychologists create safe, positive school climates by preventing bullying and other forms of violence (n=37, 20.11%). The principals who reported barriers indicated that school psychologists lacked adequate time to fill this role (n=12, 8.39%), someone else fills this role (n=127, 88.81%), this is not a need in our school (n=1, 0.70%) and school psychologists are not trained for this (n=3, 2.10%).

Just under a third of the principals reported that school psychologists create safe, positive school climates by implementing and promoting positive discipline (n=51, 27.57%). There were 15 (11.03%) principals who reported that school psychologists

were unable to fill this role due to inadequate time to do so, 118 principals (86.76%) reported that someone else fills this role, one principal (0.74%) reported this was not a need in their school, two principals (1.47%) reported they did not believe school psychologists were trained for this.

Strengthening Family and School Partnerships

Overall, the principals reported that school psychologists strengthened family and school partnerships through their work in special education support the most frequently. The total number of responses for this set of questions ranged from a low of 181 to a high of 183.

Table 5

Total Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived School Psychologist's Role in Strengthening Family and School Partnerships

School Psychologists Strengthen Family School Partnerships By:	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Assisting in navigating special education processes	183	183 (81%)
Helping families understand their child's learning needs	183	183 (82%)
Helping families understand their child's mental health needs	183	183 (81%)
Connecting families with community service providers when necessary	182	182 (55%)
Helping effectively engage families with teachers	182	182 (33%)
Helping effectively engage families with other school staff (e.g. principal...	181	181 (40%)
Helping students transition between school and community learning environments	181	181 (31%)
Enhancing staff understanding of diverse cultures and backgrounds	181	181 (22%)

A majority of principals reported that school psychologists strengthened family and school partnerships by assisting in navigating special education processes (n=149,

81.24%). For those who reported that school psychologists did not fill this role, 5 (14.71%) reported they lacked time to do so, 26 (76.47%), reported someone else filled this role, 2 (5.88%) reported this was not a need for their school and 1 (0.15%) reported that school psychologists are not trained for this.

A majority of principals also reported that school psychologists' strengthened family and school partnerships by helping families understand their child's learning needs (n=148, 81.97%). For those who did not utilize their school psychologist in this way, 5 (13.89%) reported their school psychologist was unable to due to lack of time, 29 (80.56) reported someone else filled this role, one (2.78%) reported this was not a need in their school and one (2.78%) reported school psychologists are not trained for this.

Most principals reported that school psychologists strengthened family and school partnerships by helping families understand their child's mental health needs (n=148, 80.87%). Nine principals (25.00%)reported their school psychologist did not fill this role due to lack of time to do so, 22 (61.11%)who reported that someone else filled this role in their school, one (2.78%) who reported this was not a need in their school and four (11.11%)who reported that school psychologists were not trained for this.

There were sixty principals who reported that school psychologists strengthen family and school partnerships by helping effectively engage families with teachers (32.97%) Of those who reported barriers, 21 (17.36%) reported they lacked time to engage in this role 96 (79.34%) reported someone else filled this role, 1 (0.83%) reported this was not a need in their school and 3 (2.48%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Almost 40% of the principals reported that school psychologists strengthen family and school partnerships by helping effectively engage families with other school staff (n=72, 39.78%) Of those who reported barriers to using their school psychologists in this way, 18 (16.82%) reported they lacked time to engage in this role, 83 (77.57%) reported someone else filled this role, 2 (1.87%)reported this was not a need in their school and 4 (3.74%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

About a third of the principals reported that school psychologists strengthen family and school partnerships by helping students transition between school and community learning environments (n=56, 30.94%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported they did not because they lacked time to engage in this role (n=21, 16.94%), 86 (69.35%) reported someone else filled this role, 11(8.87%) reported this was not a need in their school and 6 (4.84%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

About 20% of the principals reported that school psychologists strengthen family and school partnerships by enhancing staff understanding of diverse cultures and backgrounds (n=29, 21.55%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported they did not because they lacked time to engage in this role (n=26, 18.57%), 103 (73.57%) reported someone else filled this role, 5(3.57%) reported this was not a need in their school and 6 (4.29%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

School-Wide Assessment and Accountability

Overall, the principals reported school psychologists improved school-wide assessment and accountability in a variety of roles around half of the time. The total number of responses for this set of questions ranged from a low of 177 to a high of 180.

Figure 6

Total Number of Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived School Psychologist's Role in Improving School-Wide Assessment and Accountability

School Psychologists Improve School-Wide Assessment and Accountability By:	**Total Number of Responses**	**Total Number of "YES" Responses**
Collecting data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes	180	47%
Monitoring individual student progress in academics	180	41%
Monitoring individual student progress in behaviors	180	51%
Generating useful student sand school outcome data	180	39%
Interpreting useful student and school outcome data	180	48%
Analyzing data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes	179	48%
Planning services at the district level	179	31%
Planning services at the building level	178	43%
Planning services a the classroom level	177	33%
Planning services at the individual level	177	52%

Just under half of the principals reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by collecting data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes (n=84, 26.67%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=20, 21.74%), 66 (71.74%) reported someone else filled this role, 1 (1.09%)

reported this was not a need in their school and 5 (5.43%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

There were 86 (48.04%) principals who reported school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by analyzing data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes. Of those who did not use their school psychologist for this role, 21 (23.33%) reported they did not because the school psychologist lacked time to engage in this role. There were 62 (68.89%) who reported someone else filled this role. One principal reported this was not a need in their school (1.11%) and 6 (6.67%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this role.

There were 73 (40.56%) principals who reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by monitoring individual student progress in academics. Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=12, 11.32%), 91 (85.85%) reported someone else filled this role, and 3 (2.83%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Just over half of the principals reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by monitoring individual student progress in behaviors (n=92, 51.11%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=12, 14.29%), 68 (80.95%) reported someone else filled this role, and 4 (4.76%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

There were 70 (38.89%) principals who reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by generating useful student and school outcome data. Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=18, 16.36%), 83 (75.45%) reported someone else filled this role, 2 (1.82%) reported this was not a need in their school and 7 (6.36%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Just under half reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by interpreting useful student and school outcome data (n=87, 48.33%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=19, 20.00%), 70 (73.68%) reported someone else filled this role, 1 reported this was not a need in their school (1.05%) and 5 (5.26%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

About a third of principals reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by planning services at the district level (n=56, 31.28%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=23, 19.17%), 92 (76.67%) reported someone else filled this role, 1 (0.83%) reported this was not a need in their school and 4 (3.33%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

There were 77 (43.26%) principals who reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by planning services at the building

level. Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=17, 17.35%), 78 (79.59%) reported someone else filled this role, and 3 (3.06%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

About a third of principals reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by planning services at the classroom level (n=58, 32.77%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=19, 15.83%), 96 (80.00%) reported someone else filled this role, 1 reported this was not a need in their school (0.83%) and 4 (3.33%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

Just over half reported that school psychologists improve school-wide assessment and accountability by interpreting useful student and school outcome data (n=92, 51.98%). Those who did not use their school psychologist for this role reported their school psychologist did not have time to engage in this role (n=17, 19.32%), 69 (78.41%) reported someone else filled this role, and 2 (2.27%) reported that school psychologists do not have training for this.

School Psychologist Observed Skills

The principals were then given a list of 13 skills that the National Association of School Psychologists reports school psychologists are trained in. The most highly reported skills that principals observed school psychologists possess were consultation skills (n=169, 94.41%), assessment skills (n=166, 92.74%) and data analysis skills (n=162, 90.50%).

The next most frequently observed set of skills that principals reported they have observed in school psychologists were collaboration skills (n=160, 89.89%), data collection (n-154, 86.03%) and behavioral interventions (n=144, 80.45%).

Just under 70% of the time, principals reported that school psychologists have progress monitoring skills (n=123, 68.72%), academic intervention skills (n=123, 68.72%) and mental health intervention skills (n= 121, 67.60%).

Table 7

Total Number of Principal Responses and Percentage of "Yes" Responses Regarding Perceived School Psychologist's Skills

My School Psychologist Has These Skills	**Percentage of "Yes" Responses**	**Total Number of Responses**
Consultation	94%	179
Assessment	93%	179
Data analysis	91%	179
Collaboration	90%	178
Data collection	86%	179
Behavioral interventions	80%	179
Academic interventions	69%	179
Progress monitoring	69%	179
Mental health interventions	68%	179
Crisis response	58%	178
Family-school-community collaboration	57%	178
Research and program evaluation	52%	179
Instructional support	49%	178

Crisis response skills were reported by 104 of the principals (58.43%) and family-school-community collaboration was reported by 102 (57.30%) of the principals. Ninety-

three (51.96%) principals reported that school psychologists have research and program evaluation skills and 87 (48.88%) reported that school psychologists have instructional support skills.

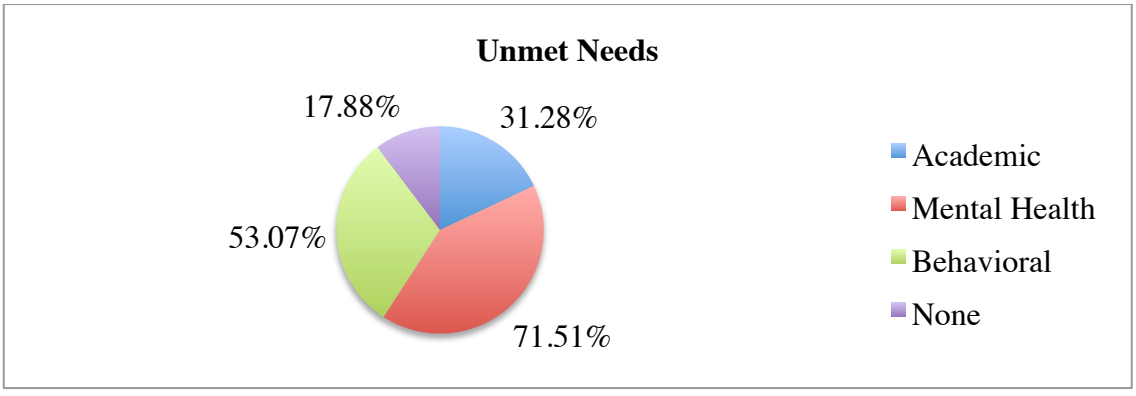
School Psychology Time & Unmet Needs

Just over half of the principals reported they had sufficient school psychologist time (n=95, 53.07%). The principals were asked what areas they felt they had unmet needs, academic, mental health, behavioral or none. They could also check as many or as few as were applicable. The number of responses varied from 178 to 179.

The most commonly reported unmet need by the principals was mental health (n=128, 71.51%). There were 95 (53.07%) principals who reported they had an unmet need in behavior and 56 (31.28%) who reported they had unmet academic needs. There were 32 principals who reported they had no unmet needs in their building

Figure 4

Unmet Needs



Priority if Given Additional School Psychology Time

Principals were given a list 22 roles school psychologists could fulfill and asked to identify their top 3 priorities. The principals reported that the most common priority

for their school psychologist, if given additional time, would be to provide mental health interventions (n=106). The next most common priority was providing behavioral interventions (n=93). The third most common priority was facilitating social skills/mental health interventions (n=45).

Table 8

Total Number of Principal Responses for Priority use of School Psychologists if Given Additional School Psychology Time

	Frequency Count
Mental health interventions	106
Behavioral intervention	93
Facilitating social skills/mental health interventions	45
Prevention and intervention services	36
Academic/learning interventions	34
Coaching staff on behavior management	33
Responding to student behavioral needs	33
Consultation and collaboration	28
Special education services	16
Assessment	15
Resilience and risk factors	13
Data collection and analysis	11
Instructional support	11
Facilitating academic interventions	9
Facilitating professional development for staff	9
Family-school-community collaboration	8
Modeling instructions	7
Progress monitoring	6
School-wide practices to promote learning	6
Crisis preparedness, response, and recovery	5
Diversity in development and learning	1
Professional ethics, school law, and systems	0
Research and program evaluation	0

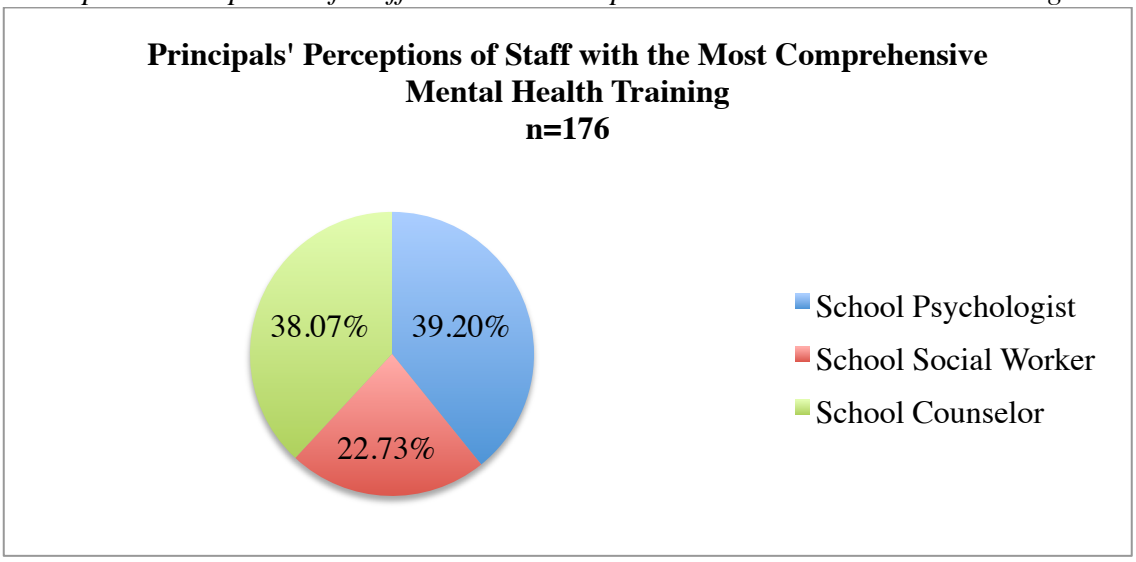
Conversely, there were no principals who reported a priority was providing support with professional ethics, school law and systems or research and program evaluation.

Mental Health Professionals

Principals were asked to answer who, based on their experiences, did they believe had the most comprehensive mental health training. School psychologists were the most commonly reported (n=69, 39.20%) with school counselors close behind (n=40, 22.73%). School social workers were reported by 40 principals (n=22.73%).

Figure 5

Principals' Perceptions of Staff with Most Comprehensive Mental Health Training



Summary

A web-based survey was sent to principals in 8 states. There were 213 responding principals. Most of the school psychologist positions were funded with special education dollars.

The roles that principals reported school psychologists filled the most were related to assessment, data collection, communicating needs and planning special education services. Specifically, they were frequently reported to improve academic achievement by interpreting student data (81.59%), collecting student data (70.00%), conducting psychological assessments (87.44%). They also most frequently reported promoting positive behavior and mental health by assessing student emotional needs (85.64%) and assessing student behavioral needs (88.32%). They were frequently reported to support diverse learners by planning appropriate IEP programs for students with disabilities (71.28%). Finally, they were reported to strengthening family and school partnerships by assisting in navigating special education processes (81.42%), helping families understand their child's learning needs (81.79%) and helping families understand their child's mental health needs (80.87%).

School psychologists were most frequently reported to have the skills of consultation (94.41%), assessment (92.74%), and data analysis (90.50%).

Most principals reported they had unmet needs in their school. Those unmet needs included academic needs (31.28%), behaviorally needs (53.07%) and most commonly, mental health needs (71.51%).

Principals reported that school psychologists are the most comprehensively trained mental health professionals they work with (compared to a social worker or school counselor) and that if given more school psychologist time, they would have prioritize the school psychologists' time to be spent on mental health interventions, behavioral intervention and facilitating social skills/mental health interventions.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Introduction

This mixed-methods study was a two-phase study. The methodology for the study and the participants were described in Chapter Three. Chapter Five contains an explanation of the data from phase two of the study, the qualitative phase. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with 26 principals from South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas.

Most of the interviews took place in person (n=16), the rest were completed over the phone (n=10). The interviews lasted on average 29 minutes and 49 seconds. The shortest interview was 18 minutes and 35 seconds. The longest interview was 53 minutes and 47 seconds.

Participants were interviewed using a semi standardized set of questions. Their responses were recorded and analyzed for themes. The transcripts were hand coded to analyze identified themes.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews in phase two were coded and organized into themes. From the codes, the following themes were identified: serving mental health needs in schools, staffing and funding implications, barriers to providing comprehensive school psychology services, and roles principals want school psychologists to fill. Following is an explanation of each of the themes.

Serving Mental Health Needs

There were 25 principals who reported having unmet behavior/social emotional or mental health needs during the interview and further reported challenges to filling the mental health needs of their students with the resources they have. Within the context of serving the mental health needs of students, there were three themes that. They are using community agencies, limiting the use of school psychologists and creating new positions/hiring new staff to fill positions that school psychologists are trained for.

There were 13 principals who referred to partnerships with community agencies in order to meet the needs of their students. Several reported that they relied completely or almost completely on community providers to support their students' needs. One principal, who has a school psychologist 2 days per week explained that he is not allowed to use his school psychologist to serve mental health needs, even though they are a main concern for him in his district. He explained, "…we're fully reliant on local providers, community providers."

Two principals talked about a desire to obtain a community provider who can provide services at their school. One principal referred to grants that she had written and collaboration with her and community providers to meet the needs of students with mental health needs. Another described her vision for mental health services in this way, "My pie in the sky is to try to have a mental health counselor in the building a couple days a week."

There were also six principals who reported that their district or education agency had strict rules in place about what settings a school psychologist can work in. For example, one principal, who also acknowledged that she had unmet mental health needs in her building reported that although she has a school psychologist 2 and ½ days per week she too is not allowed to work much outside of special education due to the district position that special education funded positions can only work with special education staff. So, the district has tried to meet the needs by hiring their schools a full time behavior intervention teacher, but she did not have any idea what their training or background was that would make them a good candidate for that position.

Staffing & Funding Implications

The results of the quantitative survey indicated that most of the school psychologist positions were funded through special education. However, for many, this has limited the work of a school psychologist. There were three principals who specifically talked about how special education funding limited the role and work of school psychologists.

One principal explained how the funding source has limited the use of school psychologists by stating, "…because she's funded with special ed funds, it's pretty clear, you know, where her maintenances has to be in." He explained that neither his social worker or is school psychologist is allowed to do anything outside of special education because their positions are paid for out of special education dollars.

Another principal explained that in the last several years, the state and possibly federal government had told her state to be more strict on how special education dollars

were spent which was interpreted as school psychologists could only work with special education students. She explained, "When that happened, that was not…very beneficial for us."

One principal summarized the problem with using only special education dollars to fund school psychologists by asking, "Is there a way we can advocate for more funding for school psychologists? I'm telling you, we need more of these, more psychologists and social workers, and mental health workers in our elementary schools, even more so than we need academic intervention….If we can take care of kid's mental health and social/emotional junk, I think we would need less academic interventions, I really do, at least for about a fourth of our kids. There's gonna be a fourth that still need it, and then a fourth that are gonna eventually show a learning disability of some sort. But I think of the intervention kiddos, I really think we could just do a whole lot of good if we could meet their other needs. So if we could advocate for more money in the general fund to go toward school psychologists, I think that would be a really positive thing. Cause right now I know many schools only fund it through SPED and maybe a little bit of other stuff, and that's just not enough people to go around, you know?"

The other impact of insufficient staffing is that staff who are not the most highly qualified or highly trained staff are asked to fill roles that they are not trained in. One principal explained that because they are given inadequate school psychology time, he is often asked to do things he is not trained to do, "In fact, we don't have that training as a principal, and yet, I am shocked at the number of those kinds of problems that I'm asked

to work with kids through." He later said, 'Yeah, I'm not trained to work with girls who have eating disorders, and yet that's something I do on a daily basis."

Another principal from a different state echoed the same concerns. She said, "I sometimes feel like oh my goodness, I'm wearing a hat that I really don't have the license to wear."

Even a principal who admittedly reported having no experience with school psychologists outside of the special education evaluation process and further admitted he had no knowledge that school psychologists were trained for anything else, admitted that they were insufficiently staffed to meet the mental health needs of students and consequently were asking school counselors to fill a role they were not trained for. He said, "Unfortunately, we probably dump a lot of mental issues onto their lap without them having the training, us not providing it." He went on to say, "And most of them are learning on the job. So they don't have experience…" He also said in reference to school counselors trying to meet the mental health needs of students, "They do the best they can with what they know."

Another principal, who works in a state where school psychologists can only work with special education students, explained she was allowed to hire a "Student Support Facilitator." She described this person as providing consultation, developing plans and supporting students. He is paid through her general budget and it is unclear what type of training he has that would make him qualified to provide those services.

Another principal, from another state, had the same experience but expressed his doubts with the accuracy of this belief. He said, "I find a lot a times generally, a lot a

special educators right or wrong, say that no we can't do that because it's Special Ed funded and I'm only s'psoed to work Special Ed….Oftentimes looking at the letter of the law, and just looking at practical issues on a campus that's not really true."

Barriers to Providing Comprehensive School Psychology Services

Most principals reported that their school psychologists were primarily or entirely funded through special education dollars. This, then, has led to barriers as states, district and education agencies interpret their jobs as only serving special education students and process.

The mindset of district leaders on how school psychologists can be used can also be a barrier. There were principals from every state who mentioned that district leadership limited their ability to work with school psychologists outside of special education. One principal, who had never experienced a school psychologist outside of the special education process, explained that unless and until district personnel were willing to talk about using school psychologists differently, there would be no way to change how they were used.

Every principal except one, explained that one of the main barriers to using their school psychologists in a more comprehensive manner to provide services to students, staff and families was insufficient time. One principal reported that she had a school psychologist only when called upon which was usually about 15 times per year.

Two principals talked about the challenge of having a different school psychologist from year to year. The staff were unable to get to know the school psychologist well and the school psychologist was unable to learn the systems and

processes well. This hindered the work the school psychologist could accomplish in the building.

Finally, there is simply a lack understanding of the roles and skills school psychologists have. One principal had no experience outside of special education testing and seemed almost amused that I was suggesting they could do anything else. Yet, he admitted his school lacked the mental health supports they needed and were asking school counselors to fill a role they were not trained for.

Even those who had a better handle of the roles and skills school psychologists had and were using them effectively seemed to struggle to identify what was the skillset of a school psychologist and what was the skillset of the counselor or school social worker. One principal, when asked if the person filling her school psychologist/school counselor role was actually a certified school counselor of just a school psychologist filling a comprehensive role admitted she was not sure but thought that probably the person was just a certified school psychologist. Yet, still referred to this person as a school counselor.

Another who also had a person filling a role that was quantified as both school counselor and school psychologist explained that his school psychologist provided more counseling than other school psychologists because, "She is very much a counselor at heart."

Several indicated that just taking the survey had opened their eyes to the roles and skills that school psychologists could and should have. One said, Well I, you know, … going through your survey opened my eyes to some things that they can do." Another

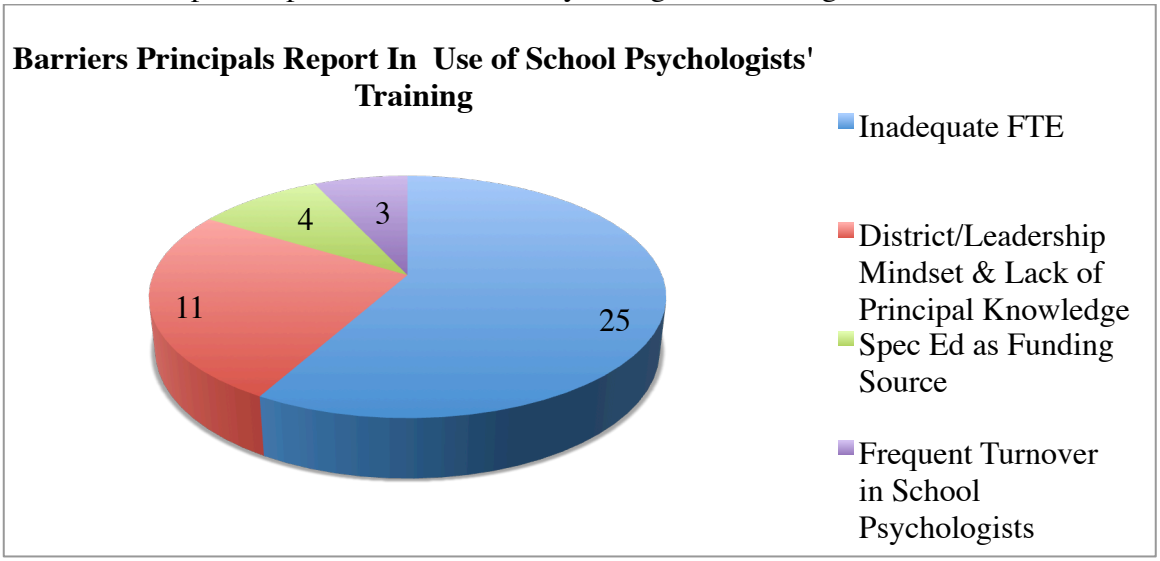
principal explained that he has just recently started to learn about the comprehensive services school psychologists can fill. He said, "I'll fully admit, until recently…I didn't start to become fully familiar with the different things that school psychologists can do."

Roles Principals Want School Psychologists to Fill

Over and over, the most common role principals reported they wanted school psychologists to fill was to provide direct services to students (n=19). Whether this was academic support, behavior, social/emotional or mental health, was varied. What was constant was a desire for the school psychologists to work directly with the students.

Figure 6

Barriers Principals Report to Use School Psychologist's Training



They also wanted the school psychologists working with their teachers. Some described this as coaching, some described this work as consultation (n=14). There were some who also described this work as providing professional development to teachers and other staff (n=6).

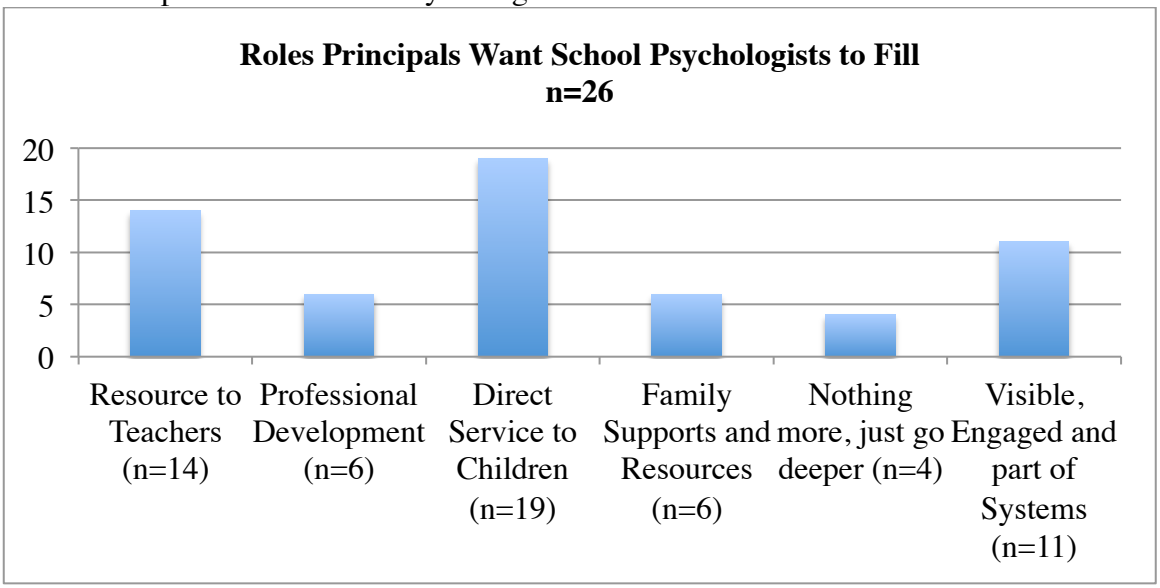
There were 11 principals who talked about school psychologists within the context of being visible, engaged and simply, part of their systems or structures. One principal said explained that his school psychologist is used effectively because he is "fully integrated in their systems."

The other areas principals wanted their school psychologist providing services were supporting families through trainings or offering resources (n=6).

Finally, there were four principals who said they did not want school psychologists to take on more roles but rather have time to do the work they are currently doing at a deeper level.

Figure 7

Roles Principals Want School Psychologists to Fill



Characteristics of Successful School Psychology Services

There were several instances of principals working well with school psychologists. There were two commonalities under this theme.

The first is that the principal and school psychologist had a strong and trusting relationship. Several even referred to them as being part of the leadership team or being leaders in the implementation of different teams and initiatives.

The second commonality is that the principals described their school psychologists as being part of the building systems. One principal explained the roles his school psychologist filled by explaining over and over that she (his school psychologist) was, "Just an integral part of the team, integral part of the process."

Another talked about the importance of the work their school psychologist does and explained it's successful, "Because she's connected to all of us and she knows all the systems." She went on to say, "Our school psychologist is here with us, knowing us, building relationships over years with parents, and with kids and with staff, and as part of us."

Another said, "They need to be a part of this system. When they're a part of this system, and people see them on a daily basis, their credibility builds, their ideas will be heard, there's follow through."

Summary

The information in Chapter Five explained the qualitative data from phase 2. Participants volunteered for participation in follow-up interviews after completing the online survey in phase 1. The interview took place with 26 principals. The transcribed interviews were hand-coded and five themes emerged: serving mental health needs, staffing and funding implications, barriers to providing comprehensive school

psychology services, roles principals want school psychologists to fill and Characteristics of Successful School Psychology Services.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study was conducted to better understand principal perspectives of school psychologist roles and skills. Although there is a plethora of research on how school psychologists can be used, there is also a great deal of evidence that school psychologists are not being utilized as comprehensively as they could be. In this study, I sought to better understand principal perspectives about school psychologists in order to gain information that will help both school psychologists and principals' work more efficiently and effectively.

Findings Related to Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following four research questions:

- What roles and skills do principals believe school psychologists have?
- What are the differences between principals who have a strong understanding of school psychologist roles and skills and those who do not?
- What factors influence how principals utilize school psychologists in their schools?
- What barriers exist to using school psychologists in a comprehensive service delivery way?

Question 1: What roles and skills do principals believe school psychologists have?

Principals reported, most frequently, that school psychologist roles had to do with assessment, data collection, communicating with parents about special education and student needs and developing special education programs.

Similarly, the most frequently reported observed school psychologist skills, according to the principals, were consultation, assessment, data analysis, collaboration, data collection and behavioral interventions, all of which were reported by more than 80% of the principals. All of the skills principals were asked about were observed 50% of the time or more except for instructional support. This was observed just under 50% of the time.

When compared to a counselor and social worker, principals reported that school psychologists were the most comprehensively trained mental health professionals. Even when the principals had not reported school psychologists as having the most comprehensive mental health trainings, during the interviews they shared they knew school psychologists were trained mental health professionals. They further reported that because others, usually social workers, were given time to focus just on mental health support in the building, the principals were more likely to think of the that person first when thinking about mental health professionals.

Question 2: What are the differences between principals who have a strong understanding of school psychologist's roles and skills and those who do not?

Based on the findings of the study, the answer to this question can be summarized in two words: experience and knowledge. Seven principals from the same school district

mentioned that they had received significant professional development from their district on the skills of school psychologists and how they could be utilized in a more comprehensive way to meet the needs of their students. Every principal from that district demonstrated a more comprehensive view of the role of school psychologists.

Conversely, one of the more experienced principals interviewed repeatedly talked about having no experience in his career with a school psychologist outside of the special education evaluation process. He explained that he had literally no idea how he would use a school psychologist because he was not aware they could do anything but evaluate. He said, "I have no idea how they could be used beyond testing and interpreting. Because that's all we've used them for." At times he seemed almost annoyed with my questions as if my suggestions about using school psychologists for anything other than testing was the most ludicrous idea he had ever heard. In fact, after the interview as we chatted a little longer when the recorder was off, he told me that he would be surprised if any other district would tell me their school psychologist did anything more than test.

Question 3: What factors influence how principals utilize school psychologists in their schools?

There are four factors that influence how principals utilize school psychologists. The four factors are related to each other.

The first factor that influenced how school psychologists can be used has to do with funding and district mindsets. Over and over principals explained that because school psychologists were funded using special education dollars, their district placed limitations on how the school psychologists could be utilized. Some explicitly said that

they had been told by their district leaders or Education Agency that school psychologists could do nothing but work with special education students. This was frustrating to principals.

The second factor that influenced how school psychologists were used had to do with how much time they had spent building a relationship with principals and becoming part of the systems in the school. When the school psychologist had put in the time to become part of the school or collaborate with principals, the principals looked for ways to use them beyond testing.

The third factor had to do with the amount of time they were assigned to a building. One principal explained she did not have a regularly scheduled time with a school psychologist. Instead, she only had school psychologist support when she specifically contacted her education agency and asked for one. As a result the school psychologist was unable to become part of the school culture and systems. The principal said, "A lot of times our teachers and kids don't even know who it is when they see her."

The final factor had to do with the principals' experience and knowledge of school psychologists. If they had never worked, or worked very little, with a school psychologist who did anything other than be a gatekeeper to special education, they expected the role to be very limited. Conversely, if their experiences were different, then their expectations were different.

Question 4: What barriers exist to using school psychologists in a comprehensive service delivery manner?

The barriers to using school psychologists had to do with how the positions were funded, the mindset of district leaders on the roles of school psychologists, amount of time they had school psychologist time, inconsistency in the school psychologist position and a general lack of understanding of the role of school psychologists.

Most school psychologists are funded through special education dollars and, for many, this has narrowed the work a school psychologist can accomplish. Related to this, is the mindset of district leaders on how school psychologists can be used. Many principals explained they were told by their education agency or central office that school psychologists can or cannot do certain things, even when they wanted to use them differently or had experienced using school psychologists differently in a different district and/or state.

The next barrier, which is directly linked to the first two, is the amount of time school psychologists are in their schools. Naturally, the less time they are in schools and the higher assessment loads they have, the more limited role they will have in the building.

Although not a frequently reported concern, the challenge of having a different school psychologist every year was a barrier because every year the staff were starting over in getting to know the school psychologist and the school psychologist getting to know them.

Finally, a lack understanding of the roles and skills school psychologists have is a barrier. Several principals mentioned, sometimes before or after the interview, how the survey had really opened their eyes to how school psychologists can be used. Even those who were doing a great job of using their school psychologists to fill comprehensive roles, seemed to struggle to see the overlap in the professions of school psychologist and school counselor.

The data from the survey indicated that each role had at least one to thirteen principals who thought that school psychologists were not trained to fill the roles they were questioned about. Yet, these roles are all roles the National Association of School Psychologists states school psychologists can and should fill.

Conclusions

The study was conducted as a mixed-methods study to develop a better understanding of principal perspectives on the roles and skills of school psychologists. The conclusions can be summarized into three core statements.

- When special education dollars are used to fund the role of the school psychologist, they are more likely to have limited roles within their positions.
- The role of the school psychologists is not well understood by principals. Even when they are doing a great job of using their school psychologists, they struggle to understand if the person is filling a school psychologist role, a counselor role or a social worker role.

- School psychologists have a role to play in helping principals understand how to utilize their skill sets more effectively and efficiently. All but one principal talked about the importance of school psychologists building relationships with the principals and advocating for their work.

Chapter 7

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The mixed-methods study was conducted to better understand principal perspectives of the roles and skills of school psychologists.

Implications for School Psychologists

Relationships with Principals are Keys to Success

Every principal who reported using their school psychologists to provide comprehensive services was able to talk extensively about the roles and skills of their school psychologists as well as how their school psychologist was a trusted and valued member of their team. One principal said, "They "…should really be finding opportunities to work with administrators…."

Those who did not report using their school psychologist comprehensively suggested that school psychologists needed to build relationships with their principals so that their principals will better understand their passions, skills, strengths and the roles they can fulfill to support the work in their buildings.

The results of the study indicated that the role of the school psychologist was more likely to be a comprehensive role if there was a strong relationship between the principal and school psychologist.

Visibility, Engagement & Relevance

Most of the principals (n=16, 62%) indicated that school psychologists who were visible, engaged in the work of the building and were part of the building systems, were

the ones who made themselves invaluable to the school. One principal specifically said, "The good ones make themselves invaluable…" Another principal echoed the same sentiment and explained that she made it a priority every year to have as much school psychologist time as she could because their work was so invaluable to her school, "Because she's connected to all of us and she knows all the systems." She said, "…our school psychologist is here with us, knowing us, building relationships over years with parents, and with kids and with staff and as part of us."

In summary, when school psychologists are visible in the school and seen as engaged members of the school community, they also are seen as a more valuable resource and more likely to engage in expanded roles.

Advocacy

NASP has called on practitioners to advocate for their roles and their work for years. They have an entire section of their website dedicated to advocacy and resources related to advocacy. Further, seven principals discussed the importance of advocacy explicitly by saying that the school psychologists must advocate for their work. One principal said, "I think that a good school psychologist has to be a salesperson and they need to convince people they have these other skills." Another principal said, "…it is their job to educate, to really promote their program, to promote their job, how it's a benefit to all students in the building…"

One principal had no experience with a school psychologist outside of the special education evaluation process. He was astounded at the idea they could do anything else and yet even he recognized this was partially the school psychologist's responsibility to

help him become aware of this. “If I could see the benefit, you know…. but again, they’re not promoting themselves.”

School psychologists should consider looking at advocacy in three ways. The first is within their own building. They should build relationships with administrators and staff to build awareness of their skills. This was stated by the principals repeatedly.

The second way is within their district. Principals reported that at times a barrier to using school psychologists were limitations placed on the school psychologists by either their district leadership or service unit or agency. One principal said, “I wish that we could utilize the school psychologist more, but we’re not able to.” She said they were, “…told by feds or state, all psych work had to be connected to special ed. And when that happened, that was not…. very beneficial for us.” If principals want to use their school psychologists in more comprehensive roles, but their district leadership will not allow it, then school psychologists need to work with district administrators and build awareness of their skills.

The third way is at the community and state level. If administrators and teachers are confused about the role of the school psychologist, then those who do not work in the building, such as state legislators, state school board members and other community members also may be confused. One principal explained to me after the interview that her state legislator is trying to help. She explained the state legislatures recognizes that there were behavioral and mental health needs in the schools so they are trying to help with these issues by advocating for school counselors. “But,” she told me, “I don’t need a counselor…I need a school psychologist or social worker.” This is an example of well-

intended individuals (state legislators) trying to help; but, who lacked the right information. If school psychologists build awareness of their work at the community and state level, it is more likely that influential decision makers may become advocates for school psychologists as well.

Implications for School Psychologist Training Programs

Relationships Matter for You, Too

Building relationships and partnerships with preparation programs for principals are important for both school psychologists and principals. These relationships and partnerships allow principals-in-training to learn about the roles and skills of school psychologists. School psychologist training programs should consider partnering projects that allow them to work collaboratively with teachers and principals.

In the school psychologist training program, emphasis should be placed on preparing school psychologists-in-training to build relationships with principals and teachers in the schools. Relationships are the foundation for the work they will accomplish with students in the schools. Based on the research findings, if school psychologists did not develop relationships with principals, they were less likely to be able to provide comprehensive services to the students. Thus, they had less impact on the students.

Implications for School Psychologist State Associations

Advocacy

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) provides information to their membership via the web and also through the annual conference, Public Policy

Institute. The information can be used by practitioners and by state associations. Representatives of state school psychologist associations should consider talking to their state representatives. The associations should become more visible at the state level. State school psychology association should attempt to partner with state administrator associations, teacher associations and school board associations in their efforts to advocate for the needs of children.

Relationships

Relationships with legislators, educational leadership associations, teacher associations, departments of education and school boards members are instrumental to the success of efforts by state school psychology associations to advocate for their work in the schools. Through that work, all these groups collectively strive to meet the needs of students.

Implications for Principals

Relationships

Principals noted repeatedly that the key to a successful partnership was to get to know the school psychologist. One principal said, "Know their strengths and tap into them." Another said, "Capitalize on their strengths." One said, "Utilize their resources…see what their goals are…capitalize on their strengths." At the end of one interview a principal said, "I should reach out to my school psychologist and talk to her more." By getting to know school psychologists better, principals may be able to utilize their expertise and partner more effectively with them to improve the school psychological services.

The admonition that emerged from the findings was principals should get to know school psychologists. By building relationships, principals can discover how school psychologists fit in and augment the existing systems.

Re-Think Role Definitions

Based on the findings of the study, it may be useful for the principal and school psychologist to discuss the role of the school psychologist in the school. This conversation would provide the opportunity for the school psychologist to present the skills and specialties they bring to their work to the principal. In turn, the principal would be provided with the opportunity to identify the needs that exist in the school that the school psychologist may be able to address. The results of the conversation could lead to a better utilization of the school psychologist's time and talents and better service to the students in the school.

Half of the principals (n=13, 50%) said they relied on community providers for mental health services. Mental health services provided by school psychologists were "very limited." These services were typically only available to special education students. Principals should consider using the expertise of the school psychologist in order to provide counseling and mental health services in the school.

Implications for District Personnel

Re-Think Funding

Principals reported that special education funding limited school psychology services. If this is the case, then efforts should be made to identify alternative funding

sources. School district budget experts may be able to identify potential funding sources to support the work of school psychologists.

Implications for Principal Preparation Programs

Knowledge

Principals noted that their preparation program did not make them aware of the roles and strengths of school psychologists. Principal preparation programs should include information about the work and expertise of school psychologists in the programs. Partnerships with school psychologist training programs should be developed. This should be a reciprocal process between the two programs in order to enhance their work with students in the schools.

Implications for School Boards

Knowledge

One responsibility of a school board is to assure schools are using tax dollars efficiently. An underutilized staff resource is not financially responsible. Based on the findings of this study, school psychologist services are an underutilized resource. School board members would benefit from a greater understanding of the roles and skills of school psychologists. The board members should assure maximum use of their skills.

Implications for State and Federal Government Representatives

Knowledge

Overwhelmingly, the principals interviewed reported the growing mental health needs of the students. After the recording of an interview ended, one principal shared that her state recognizes the growing mental health needs and state legislators were

attempting to respond by increasing the number of school counselors. She said, "I don't need a school counselor! I wish they would ask me what I need! I need a school psychologist or social worker." In other words, well-intended individuals make decisions for the schools; but, often they fail to talk to the principals. State legislators need to talk to the professionals in schools so they can make informed decisions, not just well-intended decisions.

Defining Terms to Improve Conversations

During the interviews, the terms "mental health," "behavior," and "social emotional" were not identified for the participants. With the diversity of knowledge and backgrounds principals have concerning mental health, and because the three terms, "mental health," "behavior," and "social emotional" can overlap, it is important that education leaders define the terms so that we have a common vocabulary. This will help educators as well as school board members, administrators, state legislators, and others who work with students to communicate effectively.

Future Research

In this study, I sought to explore the perspectives of principals on the roles and skills of school psychologists. However, through the study, it became clear that district philosophies can impact the use of school psychologists as well. Future studies should consider examining the perspectives of district office or central office personnel on the roles and skills of school psychologists.

Because special education funding often limits the role of school psychologists, it would be beneficial for future research to explore the characteristics of schools that do

not use special education dollars to fund the role of the school psychologists. It would benefit other schools to learn how these positions are funded.

Additionally, because principals described using community resources to meet mental health needs, future research should consider evaluating the success of the use of community resources to meet the needs of students with mental health concerns. An additional study should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of school psychologists to meet the mental health needs of students.

Principals reported hiring a staff person, whose title varied from school-to-school but whose training or training requirements were unclear. These individuals were employed to work with student behavior issues. It would be useful to conduct a study to identify the preparation these individuals had in order to fulfill these roles. Additionally, it would be useful to conduct a study to determine the training these individuals had for their roles as well as to determine their effectiveness in these roles.

Conclusion

In the study, I sought to develop an understanding of principal perspectives of the roles and skills of school psychologists.

The findings of the study provide information that extends beyond the perspective principals have of school psychologists. The findings suggest implications for training programs for both school psychologists and principals, for district leaders, school board members and state legislators.

School psychologists are an untapped resource. They have skills and should be utilized to address unmet needs in the schools, particularly the mental health needs of students.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Principal Email Invite

My name is Jill McCaslin-Timmons. I am a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

I am contacting you to invite you to complete a brief 10-minute online survey regarding your perspectives of the roles and skills of school psychologists.

The last two questions of the survey are optional and ask for your name and contact information if you are willing to participate in a follow up interview. Otherwise your answers will remain anonymous.

There are no known risks or discomforts for participation.

The results this study will provide information that educational leaders and school psychologists can use to develop strategies to better inform their respective groups about the roles of school psychologists.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at anytime by contacting Jill McCaslin-Timmons at 402-770-2007 or jill.mccaslin-timmons@huskers.unl.edu.

You may also contact Dr. Marily Grady at 402-472-0974 or mgrady1@unl.edu. If you would like to speak to someone else, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or irb@unl.edu.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By clicking on the "I agree" link below, your consent to participate is implied.

You should print a copy of this page for your records.

I agree

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study. If you have any questions, please contact me by email or telephone.

Sincerely,

Jill McCaslin-Timmons jill.mccaslin-timmons@huskers.unl.edu
Phone: 402-770-2007

Marilyn L. Grady mgrady1@unl.edu
Phone: 402-472-0974

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE QUALTRICS PRIVACY POLICY FOR MORE INFORMATION:

http://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/

APPENDIX B: Quantitative Survey Questions

Q At what level do you serve as principal?
- Elementary School (1)
- Middle School (2)
- High School (3)

Q Including this year, how many years have you been a principal?
- 1st year of principalship (1)
- 2 years as a principal (2)
- 3 years as a principal (3)
- 4 years as a principal (4)
- 5 or more years as a principal (5)

Q In what state are you a principal?
- North Dakota (1)
- South Dakota (2)
- Nebraska (3)
- Kansas (4)
- Oklahoma (5)
- Texas (6)
- Iowa (7)
- Minnesota (8)

Q What is the population of the building that you serve?
- Less than 300 (1)
- 301-500 (2)
- 501-700 (3)
- 701-900 (4)
- 901-1100 (5)
- 1101-1300 (6)
- 1301-1500 (7)
- More than 1500 (8)

Q How many days per week do you have a school psychologist in your building?
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- Only when needed and called upon (6)

Q What is the total enrollment of your district?

- Less than 1000 (1)
- 1001-5000 (2)
- 5001-10,000 (3)
- 10,001-15,000 (5)
- 15,001-20,000 (6)
- 20,001-25,000 (7)
- 25,001-30,000 (8)
- 30,001-35,000 (9)
- 35,001-40,000 (10)
- 40,001-45,000 (11)
- 45,001-50,000 (12)
- More than 50,000 (13)

Q How is your school psychologist position funded?

- Special education funds (1)
- General education funds (2)

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve academic achievement?

	School Psychologists Improve Academic Achievement By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Conducting psychological assessments (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Conducting academic assessments (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Managing student behavior (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Managing classroom behavior (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve academic achievement?

	School Psychologists Improve Academic Achievement By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Promoting student motivation (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Promoting student engagement (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitoring student progress (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Collecting student data (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve academic achievement?

	School Psychologists Improve Academic Achievement By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Collecting classroom data (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interpreting student data (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interpreting classroom data (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reducing inappropriate referrals to special education (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve academic achievement?

	School Psychologists Improve Academic Achievement By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Individualizing instruction (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Individualizing interventions (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to promote positive behavior and mental health?

	School Psychologists Promote Positive Behavior and Mental Health By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Assessing student emotional needs (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assessing student behavioral needs (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing individual counseling (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing group counseling (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to promote positive behavior and mental health?

	School Psychologists Promote Positive Behavior and Mental Health By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Facilitating problem solving instructional groups (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Facilitating anger management instructional groups (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Facilitating conflict resolution instructional groups (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Promoting positive peer relationships (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to promote positive behavior and mental health?

	School Psychologists Promote Positive Behavior and Mental Health By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not having training for this (4)
Promoting social problem solving (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Making referrals to community services provided in schools (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Helping coordinate community services provided in schools (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improving student communication (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to promote positive behavior and mental health?

	School Psychologists Promote Positive Behavior and Mental Health By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not having training for this (4)
Improving student social skills (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reinforcing positive coping skills (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reinforcing resilience (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to support diverse learners?

	School Psychologists Support Diverse Learners By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Assessing diverse learning needs (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Planning appropriate IEP programs for students with disabilities (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing culturally responsive services to students from diverse backgrounds (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing culturally responsive services to families from diverse backgrounds (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to support diverse learners?

	School Psychologists Support Diverse Learners By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Monitoring student progress (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Effectively communicating with parents about student progress (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Modifying and adapting curricula and instruction (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Adjusting classroom facilities to improve student engagement (e.g. plans location of behavior support room, suggests room arrangement) (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to support diverse learners?

	School Psychologists Support Diverse Learners By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Adjusting classroom routines to improve student engagement (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Adjusting classroom facilities to improve student learning (e.g. plans location of behavior support room, suggests room arrangement) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Adjusting classroom routines to improve student learning (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to create safe, positive school climates?

	School Psychologists Create Safe, Positive School Climates By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Implementing school-wide positive behavioral supports (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing crisis prevention services (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Providing crisis intervention services (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Supporting social-emotional learning (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to create safe, positive school climates?

	School Psychologists Create Safe, Positive School Climates By:		If you answered, NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Identifying at-risk students (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Identifying school vulnerabilities (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Preventing bullying and other forms of violence (e.g. fighting, weapons) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Implementing and promoting positive discipline (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to strengthen family and school partnerships?

	School Psychologists Strengthen Family School Partnerships By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Assisting in navigating special education processes (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Helping families understand their child's learning needs (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Helping families understand their child's mental health needs (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Connecting families with community service providers when necessary (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to strengthen family and school partnerships?

	School Psychologists Strengthen Family School Partnerships By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Helping effectively engage families with teachers (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Helping effectively engage families with other school staff (e.g. principal, counselor, custodian, etc) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Helping students transition between school and community learning environments (e.g. residential treatment or juvenile justice programs) (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enhancing staff understanding of diverse cultures and backgrounds (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve school-wide assessment and accountability?

	School Psychologists Improve School-Wide Assessment and Accountability By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Collecting data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Analyzing data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitoring individual student progress in academics (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitoring individual student progress in behaviors (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve school-wide assessment and accountability?

	School Psychologists Improve School-Wide Assessment and Accountability By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Generating useful students and school outcome data (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interpreting useful student and school outcome data (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Planning services at the district level (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Planning services at the building level (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q What roles does your school psychologist fulfill to improve school-wide assessment and accountability?

	School Psychologists Improve School-Wide Assessment and Accountability By:		If you answered NO, which of the following reasons prevent you from using your school psychologist in this way?			
	YES (1)	NO (2)	Inadequate FTE for them to engage in this (1)	Someone else in our school does this (2)	This is not a need in our school (3)	They do not have training for this (4)
Planning services a the classroom level (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Planning services at the individual level (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q My school psychologist has the following skills:

	My School Psychologist Has These Skills			If you answered "I have not observed this skill in my psychologist," please indicate why.			
	Yes (1)	No (2)	I have not observed this skill in my school psychologist (3)	Inadequate FTE to perform these skills (1)	Someone else in our school fulfills this role (2)	This is not a need for our school (3)	I didn't know they had training for this (4)
Assessment (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Consultation (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Collaboration (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Data collection (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Data analysis (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Academic interventions (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Behavioral interventions (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Crisis response (17)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family-school-community collaboration (14)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instructional support (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mental health interventions (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Progress monitoring (13)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Research and program evaluation (16)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q Do you feel you have sufficient school psychology time or FTE to support the needs of your building?

- o Yes (1)
- o No (2)

Q What areas do you have unmet needs in your building?(check all that apply)

- ❑ Academic (1)
- ❑ Mental Health (2)
- ❑ Behavioral (3)
- ❑ None (4)

Q If you had additional school psychology time or FTE, which of these would be your top THREE main priorities? Write 1, 2 and 3 in the box next to your top THREE priorities.

_____ Assessment (28)
_____ Consultation and collaboration (29)
_____ Data collection and analysis (30)
_____ Academic/learning interventions (31)
_____ Mental health interventions (32)
_____ Behavioral intervention (33)
_____ Progress monitoring (34)
_____ Prevention and intervention services (35)
_____ Resilience and risk factors (36)
_____ Crisis preparedness, response, and recovery (37)
_____ Special education services (38)
_____ School-wide practices to promote learning (39)
_____ Professional ethics, school law, and systems (40)
_____ Instructional support (41)
_____ Family-school-community collaboration (42)
_____ Diversity in development and learning (43)
_____ Research and program evaluation (44)
_____ Coaching staff on behavior management (45)
_____ Modeling instructions (46)
_____ Facilitating academic interventions (47)
_____ Facilitating social skills/mental health interventions (48)
_____ Facilitating professional development for staff (49)
_____ Responding to student behavioral needs (50)

Q Based on my experiences, the staff in my building who I believe are the most comprehensively trained mental health professionals are

- School Psychologist (1)
- School Social Worker (2)
- School Counselor (3)

Q I would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview on the role and function of school psychologists.

- YES (1)
- NO (2)

Q If you answered yes, please indicate your contact information for a follow-up interview below: Full name: Phone number: Email

APPENDIX C: Follow-Up Email To Schedule Interview

Dear _____,

My name is Jill McCaslin-Timmons and you recently participated in an online survey about your perspectives of school psychologists roles and training. In that survey you indicated your willingness to participate in a follow-up interview.

This follow-up interview will take about 45 minutes and will be audio recorded. It will take place in a location of your choice.

I would like to schedule that interview with you. Do you have a time in the next two weeks that would work for you to meet with me?

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Jill McCaslin-Timmons jill.mccaslin-timmons@huskers.unl.edu 402-770-2007

Marilyn L. Grady mgrady1@unl.edu 402-472-0974

APPENDIX D: Principal Interview Protocol

Interview Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this on Administrators' Perspectives on the Roles of School Psychologists. With your permission I would like to record this interview in order to accurately reflect your thoughts and observations. You may request I stop recording at any time.

After our interview, I will create a transcription of the digital recording. Once I have created the transcript, I will ask you to review it. I will do this to be sure that I am accurate in how I record your ideas.

I am interested in hearing your perspectives about school psychologist roles, skills and preparation. Your insights will be valuable in providing information for building and district leaders as well as school psychologists.

Your identity will remain anonymous and your participation and responses will remain confidential.

Are you ready to begin?

Interview Questions

1. I'd like to start by hearing about the academic, behavior, social/emotional and mental health needs in your school. What would you identify as your top needs?
2. Can you tell me about how those needs are partially being met right now and the barriers you have to fully meeting those needs?
3. When you think about staff members who have the skill set to support students in those areas, who do you think of?

4. How does your school psychologist address the academic delays for students in the pre-referral or RTI process?
5. How does your school psychologist support behavior?
6. How does your school psychologist support the mental health needs of students?
7. How does your school psychologist provide counseling to students?
8. How does your school psychologist address crisis response?
9. How much time would you estimate your school psychologist spends on special education evaluations?
10. In your quantitative survey, you indicated the top priorities for the school psychologist were…… Tell me about that. Why are those the areas you chose?
11. What are the barriers you face in using the school psychologists in some of the additional ways listed on the survey?
12. In your work with school psychologists, have they reported a desire to work in other areas than those they currently work in? If so, what areas?
13. In working with school psychologists, are there roles that you want them to fulfill that they are not fulfilling at this time? If so, what areas? Why?
14. As you think about working with school psychologists, are there role they could fill that would allow other staff members to think about their work differently?
15. What other staff members do you have who fulfill the roles listed on survey? What is their FTE and how are they funded?

APPENDIX E: Transcription Approval

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me regarding your perspective of school psychologists. Enclosed is a transcript of my interview with you. Once you have reviewed the transcripts, please use this form to either approve the transcript as presented, or approve the transcript with recommendations.

Please return this form, along with any recommendations to me in one of the following ways:

a) Email the form to jill.mccaslin-timmons@huskers.unl.edu

b) US Mail – Jill McCaslin-Timmons, 9220 S. 28th Street, Lincoln, NE 68516

I appreciate your participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Jill McCaslin-Timmons jill.mccaslin-timmons@huskers.unl.edu 402-770-2007

Marilyn L. Grady mgrady1@unl.edu 402-472-0974

Transcript Approval

___I approve the transcript as presented.

___I approve the transcript with the enclosed recommendations.

Name:_____

Signature:_____