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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

By **Marika Collins**, MSW, Director of Public Policy for Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, and **Adrienne Shilton**, Director of Public Policy and Strategy for California Alliance of Child and Family Services



On July 16, 2022, the U.S. successfully transitioned the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK) to an easy-to-remember 3-digit number (988).



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School-Based Mental Health – We're in for Another Challenging Year

By **Barbara J. D'Incau**, *CASP Today* Co-Editor; CASP Public Relations and Communications Co-Chair



As school psychologists head back to work for the 2022-23 school year, most are likely to continue to encounter increased numbers of students with moderate to severe mental health challenges. These may include onset of anxiety or depressive symptoms or worsening of existing mental health problems that have become manifest since school closures in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. Social isolation exacerbated students' social/emotional and behavioral difficulties upon returning to school. School psychologists are likely to see increased referrals for student mental health evaluations and services. This article examines a few of the challenges and offers resources and suggestions to support school psychologists.

Youth Mental Health Issues

Increases in Anxiety and Depression. A meta-analysis conducted by researchers at the University of Calgary reported symptoms of depression and anxiety doubled in children and adolescents globally post-pandemic and increased as the pandemic progressed (Benton, Boyd, & Njoroge, 2021). Contributing factors included social isolation, loss of peer interactions, and other lost supports

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Evaluating Effort During Testing

By Gagan Shergill



CASP Today's Student Corner offers a safe and supportive space for students to showcase what they're learning on the road to becoming school psychologists. The contents of all student articles are the views of the author and do not necessarily represent those of CASP.

"Sunil appeared to provide his best effort and motivation during testing. Thus, the results of the present evaluation are considered a valid estimate of Sunil's cognitive abilities..." Psychoeducational reports often include a comment on a student's perceived effort and motivation during testing; however, rarely include an empirical evaluation of such claims. Effort and motivation are an essential component of our evaluations. The validity of maximum performance tests, such as cognitive test batteries, are predicated on the assumption that examinees provide their best effort. Discussion of effort and effort testing is almost nonexistent within the field of school psychology (Holcomb, 2018). However, effort testing and the larger topic of noncredible performance assessment (discussed later) is well established within the adult neuropsychological literature (Greher & Wodushek, 2017). While there is a dearth of literature on the prevalence of noncredible test performance in schools, neuropsychological research indicates that between 2 to 60% of pediatric evaluations may be invalid with estimates varying by disability status and setting (Chafetz, 2008; Donders, 2005). Interpretation of cognitive test scores without critical consideration of effort has grave implications for students, and may result in interpretive errors, denial or unwarranted access to special education, and ineffective treatment planning (Kirkwood et al., 2015).

Effort

Effort as it pertains to psychoeducational evaluations can be defined as "...a student's engagement and expenditure of energy toward the goal of attaining the highest possible score on the test" (Wise & Demars, 2005, p.2). Effort is best measured as a continuous variable rather than a specific threshold of performance that a student must meet. A student's effort is likely to fluctuate during testing due to factors such as poor rapport, fatigue, hunger, illness, and as the length and difficulty of testing increases (Sattler, 2018). Because of this, effort is best measured throughout an evaluation using both behavioral indicators and direct measures, and school psychologists should remain vigilant to signs of poor effort throughout testing.

Noncredible or invalid test results may occur due to a variety of reasons, including test anxiety, malingering (intentional poor performance), and poor effort. While the following discussion focuses on effort, it may be of clinical interest for examiners to ascertain the exact reason for noncredible test performance. Readers interested in learning more about noncredible performance are directed to listen to The Testing Psychologist's podcast on the topic, entitled *A Deeper Dive Into Pediatric PVT's W/Dr. Cecil Reynolds* (Sharp, 2022). Those interested in a comprehensive treatment of the topic are directed to read Kirkwood's (2015) book, *Validity Testing in Child and Adolescent Assessment: Evaluating Exaggeration, Feigning, and Noncredible Effort*.

Behavioral Indicators of Poor Effort and Engagement

As a part of a standardized assessment, school psychologists should include direct questions and observations of factors that are known to impact an examinee's effort and overall performance during testing. Consistent with the idea that effort fluctuates throughout the testing process, examiners should remain vigilant for signs of poor effort and waning motivation before and during testing. Common signs and factors that may influence effort and engagement during testing are recorded in the table below.

| Factors | Signs/Indicators |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| External | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate sleep Hunger Emotional arousal Lack of medications Side effects of medications Glasses/hearing aids not worn |
| Nonverbal and Paraverbal Behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor eye contact Sitting with arms crossed Eye rolling Sarcastic responses and smirks Repeated or exaggerated sighing Poor social reciprocity Dismissive responses to interview questions Frequent clock checking Head down on the table Falling asleep/tired appearance Lack of compliance with test instructions Careless responses on pencil/paper tasks Signs of separation anxiety: crying, searching for caregiver, indicating desire to be with caregiver/leaving room |
| Verbal Behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative verbalizations: "I don't want to be here." Repeated desire to leave: "How many more tests do we have to do?" Frequent requests for the time Exhibiting response sets: such as answering "Yes/No" to each question or responding in a pattern, "A,B,C,D". Quick, frequent "I don't know" responses, especially after providing additional querying/prompting |

Note. Data from Carone (2015) and Sattler (2018)

While these behavioral indicators provide a firm basis to suspect

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Evaluating Effort During Testing

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motivational issues during testing, it is incumbent on the examiner to rule out alternative explanations for their occurrence. These include culturally normative modes of communication, emotional disorders (anxiety, depression, etc.), neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g. autism), and cognitive and academic weaknesses (Carone, 2015). To clarify the reason for an examinee's behavioral presentation, examiners should conduct interviews with the examinee and collateral reporters (parents, teachers, coaches, etc.), gather additional background information, and review prior reports (Carone, 2015). Gathering external sources of information may help to put the examinee's testing behavior into context and give greater confidence to the examiner regarding the validity of test results. For example, an examinee who displays oppositional behavior during testing, but not at home, would make greater sense when prior report cards, teacher reports, and student interviews reveal that the student has historically struggled in school and actively dislikes school. In this case, the student has likely associated psychoeducational testing with something that they dislike (school), and the validity of test results may be suspect. However, while behavioral indicators are an important component in determining the validity of test results, relying on them alone may lead to inaccurate conclusions (Carone, 2015). For example, if the same student also has a history of legitimate cognitive weaknesses in addition to not liking school, then it is essential to consider if the student's underperformance during testing is due to their behavior, their cognitive weaknesses, or both. Thus, in addition to subjective behavioral indicators of poor effort and engagement, there is a need for objective direct measures as well.

Direct Measures

Direct measures of effort include performance validity tests (PVTs). All PVTs operate similarly and provide a series of items that appear difficult but are easily passed by any student providing an adequate degree of effort. For example, a common PVT task paradigm is to have the examinee remember a single image and then select the correct image a few seconds later in a field of two other distractor images. These measures are typically designed to be passed by students across ability levels, such as individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders (intellectual disability, ADHD, etc.) and emotional and behavioral disorders. PVTs are highly sensitive to detecting if a student is intentionally or unintentionally underperforming on an evaluation. It is recommended that PVTs are administered throughout the assessment process and in between test batteries in order to ascertain the examinee's level of effort and engagement throughout testing (Slick et al., 1999). To accomplish this, two forms of PVTs exist, embedded measures and standalone measures.

Embedded Measures

Embedded PVTs are those measures that are incorporated into the test battery itself. A key benefit of this format of PVT is their convenience, as they do not add any additional testing time. Few measures commonly used within school psychological practice and normed on general school age samples include embedded PVTs; however, their prevalence appears to be increasing. For example, the Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning, Third Edition (WRAML-3) released in 2021 incorporates an optional validity

indicator derived by summing raw score performance on select subtests. This measure shows promise as an accurate indicator of effort with adequate sensitivity and good specificity (Adams & Sheslow, 2021). However, there are currently no known independent studies examining the validity of this measure. In addition to the WRAML-3, the Child and Adolescent Memory Profile (ChAMP) also includes a validity indicator (Sherman & Brooks, 2015). The ChAMP's optional validity indicator may be calculated by summing raw scores on specific subtests, depending on if the complete or screening batteries are administered. Summed raw scores are then compared against a cut score based on the examinee's age, with scores falling below the cutoff indicating likely invalid performance (Sherman & Brooks, 2015). The ChAMP's validity index generally has lower sensitivity compared to standalone measures in order to limit false positives in examinees with significant cognitive impairment (Kirk et al., 2020). Thus, it is recommended that additional sources of information, such as failure on other PVTs, be used in conjunction with the PVT on the ChAMP.

Standalone Measures

Standalone PVTs are measures that exist independent of broad and narrowband test batteries and are designed to be administered throughout a comprehensive psychological assessment. While several PVTs exist that have demonstrated utility in pediatric clinical populations, only two measures have been designed for and normed on school-age samples specifically, the Memory Validity Profile (MVP) and Pediatric Performance Validity Test Suite (PdPVTS). Both measures include separate cut scores for general and clinical samples. Both measures also include multiple subtests that can be administered in 3 – 7 minutes each, two on the MVP and up to five on the PdPVTS depending on the examinee's age. However, the measures differ on their task paradigms, with the MVP relying on visual and verbal memory-based tasks, whereas the PdPVTS includes visual and verbal memory-based tasks, as well as visual scanning and picture completion tasks that ostensibly do not rely on memory. Thus, the PdPVTS may be more appropriate for use with individuals with significant memory or attention challenges (Greher & Wodushek, 2017). Sensitivity and specificity on the MVP are adequate in typically developing samples and is higher than on the ChAMP. However, additional research has indicated that the MVP may not be sensitive to detecting suboptimal effort in certain clinical populations such as those with mild traumatic brain injuries (Brooks & Sherman, 2019). Sensitivity and specificity on the PdPVTS are also adequate in both general and clinical populations according to the technical manual (McCaffrey et al., 2020). However, since the PdPVTS is a newer measure, additional independent research is needed to fully evaluate the utility of the PdPVTS across diverse student populations.

Best Practices

While best practice guidelines for conducting effort assessment in pediatric populations are still emerging, guidelines established for adult assessments are highly relevant. The American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (Heilbronner et al., 2009) recommends that multiple PVTs be used throughout an evaluation. Sherman et al. (2020) recommend administering at least two PVTs, and if the

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examinee fails two or more PVTs throughout an evaluation, then the validity of test results should be called into question. Failure on PVTs should always be corroborated with behavioral observations during testing, interview data and background information (Slick et al. 1999). It is likely that evaluations of effort that are multimodal and multifaceted will provide the most valid indication of an examinee's effort. Moreover, these measures are relatively simple and quick to administer, providing robust information on validity while only adding a few minutes to a comprehensive test battery. The systematic evaluation of effort in school age youth is a burgeoning practice that is likely to gain increasing attention within schools. Empirical assessment of effort provides critical evidence for the validity of evaluations and will likely lead to more valid assessments, recommendations, and placements for school-age youth.

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A Brief Introduction to Assessing Students with Visual Impairments



By May Nguyen, MS, LEP, NCSP, ACUE, Assessment Co-Specialist

One consultation question my California School for the Blind Assessment Center team and I frequently receive is, “How do I assess students with visual impairments?” Due to the great diversity within individuals with visual impairments, there is no one-size-fits-all method or testing battery that would be appropriate for all individuals with low vision or blindness. The purpose of this article is to review key considerations when planning for evaluating a student with visual impairments, including eligibility criteria, collaboration with vision specialists, and use of RIOT (Review, Interview, Observation, and Test)/ICEL (Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and Learner) approach to assessment. In addition, this article will review freely available resources to learn more about evaluating students with visual impairments.

Eligibility

When assessing students with visual impairments, eligibility often is already established, and the focus of the evaluation shifts to what will help the student to become competent and independent. While eligibility may seem clear cut in most cases, sometimes there are questions regarding what kinds of visual impairments qualify for special education services.

Per [California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter 1, Article 3.1, § 3030. Eligibility Criteria](#), “[v]isual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision

that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.” Students do not need to be legally blind, which is more of a legal term than a functional or educational term. Students with low vision are included within the eligibility criteria. Low vision indicates a loss in vision that is uncorrectable.

The [Guidelines for Programs Serving Students With Visual Impairments, 2014 Revised Edition](#) created by the California Department of Education workgroups and committees indicated that “students with neurological visual impairments who are functionally blind or who have low vision, even with best correction” (2014, p. 7) are included in the students who are eligible for special education under the category of visual impairment. Students who have cerebral or cortical visual impairment may qualify for special education if the impairment adversely affects their educational functioning, which includes academic performance, behavior, and social-emotional functioning. The guidelines further clarify that students with learning disabilities who present with differences in their visual processing abilities are not eligible under visual impairment, which is classified as a low incidence disability (California Department of Education VI Guidelines Committees, 2014).

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School Psychologists: Tone and Intent Matter in Developing IEPs

By Kristyn Corley, LEP, BCBA; Co-owner of [Psyched Services](#) and Lanae Drachslin, Doctoral Student, University of Connecticut

The identification of a learning disability and a subsequent special education plan isn’t always a win-win for kids, especially if an unwanted result is that a child feels “pathologized” or marked out by it.

School psychologists play a defining role in setting the tone used by teachers, other members of the school community, and by the students themselves. From the start of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process to final report development, there are a few core points for them to keep in mind.

Remember the purpose of an IEP

The whole point of giving students more support is to help them say and think they “can” – not “can’t.”

Unfortunately, plenty of evidence exists that identifying the need for special education frequently results in stigma and low expectations directed toward the student. Research suggests students subjected to these will, in turn, begin to have similarly low expectations of themselves and their own capabilities (Shifrer 2013).

Psychoeducational reports and subsequent IEPs are most helpful when members of the IEP team identify both areas of strength and growth. Strength-based assessments, or SBAs, allow for a more well-rounded understanding of the student by including their unique

strengths and abilities (Climie & Henley, 2016). This approach also reflects an appreciation for the ecological and contextual variables students bring to school. In sum, SBA is more proactive, and it lends itself to a more optimistic view of the student.

To incorporate a strengths-based approach to assessments in schools, universal social-emotional screening tools can assist psychologists in identifying school-wide trends in psychological wellbeing, ones such as the Co-Vitality Social Emotional Health Survey; VIA Character Strengths; or Thrively. When completing psychoeducational assessments, try showing that student strengths are an important part of your evaluation process by formally including them in the report – just as you would include ‘Cognitive Assessment’ and ‘Academic Assessment’ results.

Be aware of family and parental concerns when evaluating students, particularly culturally diverse ones. Considering the impact of language and social communication differences on the student’s educational attainment can help school psychologists differentiate between a difference and a disability (Norbury & Sparks, 2013). Include how a student’s social context provides supportive resources, and integrate their family strengths into

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School Psychologists: Tone and Intent Matter in Developing IEPs

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report recommendations.

In reality, the diagnosis of a learning disability isn't meant to be proscriptive – nor does the research suggest it is predictive. Studies instead suggest that effort and endurance are more strongly associated with good academic outcomes than the results of assessments are (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005), and that these characteristics can be nurtured by an emphasis on positive psychology (Seligman, et al., 2009).

Examine tone at the “micro” or situational level

Tone issues don't just concern how an IEP is written. Relating to the above point, it can also have a lot to do with the way psychologists and other members of the IEP team engage with students; for example, being mindful that their tone is encouraging instead of patronizing or condescending. Psychologists have a unique opportunity to set this positive tone and should take every opportunity to do so.

Imagine the following scenario.

After a functional behavior assessment (FBA), 12-year old Sam's IEP included a goal for him to sit in class for increasing amounts of time without feeling the need to leave class to walk around or go to the bathroom. For the first two months, the IEP team decides his goal is to sit in class for at least 15 minutes before decompressing or cooling off outside.

Just days after the first IEP meeting, however, Sam decides he needs to leave class after having been there for only 5 minutes. To address the situation, the school psychologist meets with Sam one-on-one to reassure him that while it can take time to achieve new goals, the efforts he's making are seen and appreciated. Even this tone lends the implementation of strategies determined in the FBA more positive momentum.

It's also helpful to check in with ourselves if we struggle with frustration or anxiety, as this can influence how we interact with a child. If our expectations of a situation are influenced by our own emotions, this can have a negative impact on how the IEP is executed.

Consider how IEP meetings can be improved

Student strengths are often overlooked in team meetings in an effort to 'get to solving the problem'. Because you know the importance of identifying and utilizing student strengths in report writing and program planning, advocate for including strengths in IEP meetings through modeling. This can look like directly asserting their importance by starting discussions with student skills and interests. It can also look like directly including students in the process of generating their academic and personal strengths and preferences (Tucker et. al., 2022).

Parents or guardians should be advised to obtain physical copies of reports prior to the meeting in order to prepare their own questions accordingly – such as how a child's strengths in one area could be built upon to support less strong points in another. As mentioned, centering family opinions and the student's social context as part of the assessment process can highlight the supportive resources a student may have. Acknowledging this directly in IEP team meetings can both increase family buy-in and promote student wellness. This can look like calling attention to guardian contributions to the evaluation process. Outside of meetings, it can be accomplished by designing and operating school-wide programs to promote school-family partnerships (Rhee et al., 2001).

Being generally more mindful of our words and actions through each step of the IEP process can go a long way toward setting a tone of success for kids needing support.

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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

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The successful roll-out of 988 is the result the bipartisan bill known as the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, which was signed into law on October 17, 2020. The Act authorized 988 as a new three-digit number for suicide and mental health crisis. All telephone service and text providers in the U.S. and the five major U.S. territories are required by the FCC to activate 988 no later than July 16, 2022.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national network of more than 200 state and local call centers. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects callers to trained crisis counselors to receive support when experiencing a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use related crisis. **People who are worried about a loved one, or perhaps a colleague or friend who may need crisis support can also use 988 to receive guidance and support.** To reach the 988 Lifeline, people can call or text 988 or chat at Lifeline (988lifeline.org).

[Note: 1-800-273-TALK will continue to work – it will not be disconnected.]

When Californians dial 988, they will be directed to one of the state's 13 Lifeline crisis call centers. The call will be routed based on the caller's area code. California's call centers are part of the broader national 988 Lifeline crisis center network. If a local crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller is automatically routed to Didi Hirsch as the State back-up center, and subsequently to a national backup crisis center, if necessary.

The 988 Lifeline represents an unprecedented opportunity to design and build a robust behavioral health crisis prevention, response and care system, across the U.S.

Prior to the launch of 988, **Secretary Becerra** provided a strong message about 988 and the promise it holds:

"988 is more than a number, it is a message: we're there for you. Through this and other actions, we are treating mental health as a priority and putting crisis care in reach for more Americans," said Secretary Becerra, who has been meeting with states across the country about the transition to 988 as part of HHS' National Tour to Strengthen Mental Health. "There is still much work to do. But what matters is that we're launching, 988 will be live. We are looking to every governor and every state in the nation to do their part to make this a long-term success."

Can 988 be used by students or school personnel? If so, how?

These very questions were the focus of a recent webinar hosted by the CA Alliance and the California Department of Education (CDE) on August 3, 2022. You can watch the event [HERE](#). The webinar featured a dynamic youth panel, moderated by Superintendent Thurmond, addressing the needs of students. The webinar also contained an informative presentation on 988 by the leaders of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, one of the 13 988 crisis centers in the state. Didi Hirsch is overseeing the 988 implementation of all 13 crisis call centers through a contract with the Department of Health Care Services. A link to download their presentation can be found [HERE](#).

California's State Superintendent of Schools Tony Thurmond reflected at the forum about the experience of youth in our State:

"There's been a spike in all kinds of difficult experiences for our students in mental health. We've seen an increase in depression. We've seen an increase in suicide rates for many of our African American students, our LGBTQ+ students. And we know that overall, many of us have experienced the trauma of the pandemic, the trauma of watching racism and acts of hate that have been played out against many of our communities – our African American community, our Asian American community, we've seen violence in our school communities – and we know we need to do more to support our students which is why I worked with the Alliance to ensure we secured funding through the Golden State Teacher Grant to add 10,000 more mental health professionals in schools."
– **Tony Thurmond**

The youth on the panel offered incredible insights into their own experience and what needs to change:

"Schools need to invest into more peer-to-peer youth mental health programs. Young people are much more likely to talk to other young people whenever they face distress." – **Nghia Do**

"I think the biggest thing in educational spaces is that mental health is acknowledged while still being stigmatized. It's still a bad thing, it's still a subject that's tiptoed around because it's so sensitive. I think it's really important to realistically and bluntly talk about mental illness and how it can and often does lead to suicide for young people, in order to create a more understanding culture surrounding mental health. Once young people fully understand what they're experiencing and what their peers might be experiencing, it might allow for those same young people to grow together." – **Keturah Weeks**

Reflecting on the youth panel, Lyn Morris, CEO of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services offered the following perspective:

"Hearing directly from youth on what they need when it comes to supporting their mental health is paramount in addressing the youth mental health crisis. Their messages from the webinar were loud and clear—they stressed that the availability of peer-to-peer support is a critically important resource at school for their well-being along with noting the importance for the adults in their lives to actively listen and speak with compassion when talking with students at school. There is always help available—988 is a 24/7 resource for students in mental health or suicidal crisis or for anyone who is concerned about someone at risk."—**Lyn Morris, CEO, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services**

Is there sustainable funding for 988 in California? Is 988 part of the crisis care continuum?

Thanks to the dedication and commitment of Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan (AD16) California is very likely to see a sustainable funding stream established for 988 call centers through her

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The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

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Assembly Bill 988, also known as The Miles Hall Lifeline Act. It would also provide a framework for building out the crisis care continuum of services over the coming years. (Note: At the time of this writing AB 988 was released from Senate Appropriations “suspense file” and is very close to being delivered to the Governor’s desk for his consideration before the 8/31/22 deadline.)

The Newsom administration is also busy on this front. The California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) will soon be launching efforts to develop a Crisis Care Continuum plan (CCC-P) to support connections among prevention efforts like warmlines and peer support services, 9-8-8 suicide and crisis call centers, mobile crisis response, and community-based crisis care at the local level. The CCC-P will provide recommendations on how to seize this moment to invest in California’s future mental health and wellness. The CCC-P will seek input from diverse stakeholders including, but

not limited to, state departments, local jurisdictions, providers, consumers, caregivers, and family members, with a particular focus on individuals from underserved communities, communities of color, LGBTQ+, and youth.

CASP’s Mental Wellness Committee Co-Chairs, Stephanie Murray and Tom Sopp offered the following reflection about 988 and the opportunity:

“We’re incredibly grateful to see the successful rollout of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline come to pass. CASP advocated for this resource legislatively at the state level last year, and we look forward to continuing collaborating with our various partners involved in this process to ensure California’s students are equipped with safe and equitable mental health solutions.”



School-Based Mental Health – We’re in for Another Challenging Year

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from schools and communities. The summary reported children and adolescents experienced increased psychological distress requiring clinical attention. Prior to COVID-19, global estimates of youth anxiety and depression were 11.6% for anxiety and 8.5% for depression. The meta-analysis of 29 studies consisting of 80,879 youth globally suggested significant increases in rates of clinical depression (23.8%) and anxiety (19%). In light of these data, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on the youth mental health crisis and cited “the pandemic’s unprecedented impacts on the mental health of America’s youth and families, as well as the mental health challenges that existed long before the pandemic” (Health and Human Services, December 2021).

Increasing Severity of Mental Health Problems. After firearms, which recently became the leading cause of death for children in the United States (Jones, National Public Radio, April 22, 2022), some studies indicate suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth (Twenge, Cooper, Joiner, Duffy & Binau, 2019). Researchers observed an increase in youth suicide attempts by overdoses beginning around 2012. The most significant increase was among children in the 10- to 12-year-old group, which increased from 1,058 in 2010 to 5,606 in 2020 – a fivefold increase (Hottman, 2022).

Chronic Absenteeism. Over the past two years, schools struggled to keep students in school. Before the COVID-19 vaccines became available for adolescents and children, students who tested positive for the virus were sent home to quarantine along with many of their close contacts and classmates. Now in the third year of the pandemic, COVID-19 variations continue to affect student and staff attendance. Furthermore, increasing numbers of parents are choosing to keep their children out of school, or enroll them in alternate settings.

As an example, LA Unified School District estimates that between

10,000 and 20,000 students are not currently enrolled or stopped attending during the past year. This problem is most pronounced in the youngest grades. The district also sees a worsening problem with daily attendance; March 2022 data showed that more than 200,000 LAUSD students were chronically absent (Blume, 2022).

Need for Early Diagnosis and Treatment. School psychologists are familiar with research from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other sources documenting that without early diagnosis and treatment, children with mental health disorders may have long-lasting problems (<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/basics.html>). Students of color and those from low-income families are least likely to receive needed mental health services. Mental disorders are chronic health conditions that can continue through the lifespan. Without early diagnosis and treatment, children with mental disorders can have problems at home, in school, and in forming friendships. Mental disorders can also interfere with a child’s healthy development, causing problems that can continue into adulthood.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) suggested “the current mental health system is inadequate to meet the growing need among children and youth” (NASP, n.d.). But school psychologists can be proactive in improving the system of care for youth.

Resources for School Psychologists

Fortunately, school psychologists have access to information and resources through our professional organizations: California Association of School Psychologists (CASP) and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). In October 2021, a team of CASP experts wrote a detailed [resource paper](#) detailing how school psychologists are well positioned to provide mental

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health services for students at all MTSS tiers (<https://casponline.org/pdfs/position-papers/CASP%20ERMHS%20Resource%20Paper%2010-21.pdf>). Two additional efforts of these organizations are highlighted here.

NASP Resources. NASP recommends a continuum of services within which school psychologists collaborate with other educators such as school counselors and school social workers as well as community providers and families. NASP created the National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families as a public service to foster best practices in education and mental health (<center@naspweb.org>). The center offers free or low-cost resources, programs, and services on a wide range of psychological, social/emotional, and academic issues. The graphic below illustrates how school services link students with community services to provide a continuum of care.

CASP and PPS collaboration and recommendations. CASP formed a strong collaboration with Pupil Personnel Services associations to promote health and mental health services for California students. In March 2021, CASP adopted a Joint Position Statement with California Association of School Counselors and California Association of School Social Workers to address growing mental health issues facing students (<https://casponline.org>). The Position Paper recommends:

Build capacity. The organizations recognize that the State and Local Education Agencies need to invest in capacity building to meet students' mental health needs. "Having trusted adults, trained in mental health practices and familiar with all aspects of the inner workings of schools, is effective and practical in preventing and addressing mental health issues." The organizations call for "adequate financial support including funding PPS positions to recommended ratios, well-defined partnerships with community organizations, utilization of the MTSS and COST models, appropriate professional development, and more."

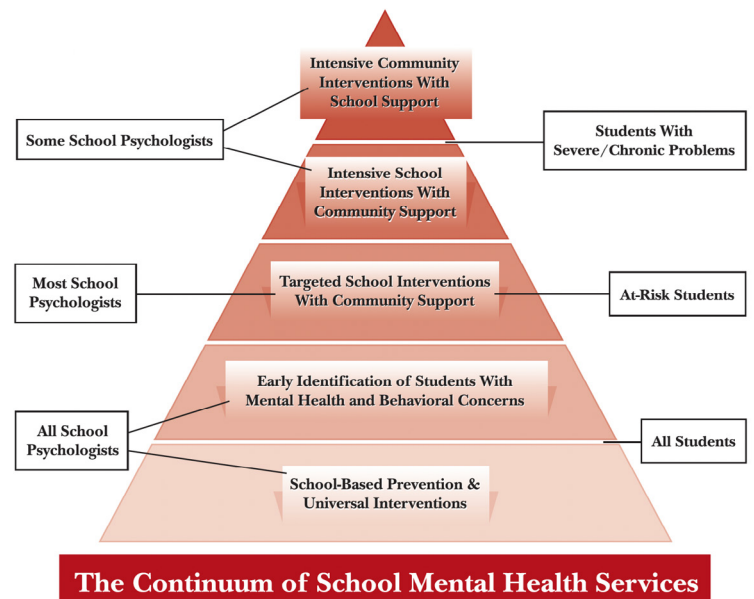
Expand mental health services through partnerships. Increased need and severity of students' mental health issues requires collaboration with other professionals within the LEA (school counselors, school nurses, school social workers) as well as expanding evaluation and treatment options in the community. One way that schools can address gaps in service and ensure continuity of services is by establishing school-based clinics for student health and mental health. The Healthy Start initiative that provided comprehensive, school-community integrated services for children, youth, and families can serve as a model. LEAs need to develop well-defined agreements with private and public community mental health providers and managed-care organizations to increase needed services for children. Outreach to professionals such as Licensed Educational Psychologists, Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Clinical Psychologists and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors can expand treatment options.

Provide coordination and school-based supervision of community and non-credentialed licensed individuals who work with students. Many LEAs contract with local agencies to provide specific services such as substance abuse education and counseling. Some of the providers may be interns who are not yet licensed. Use of these

personnel creates a need for developing policies and protocols for two-way information sharing, coordination of care, and on-site supervision. California law (80049.1(c)) requires that these individuals be supervised on site by a professional holding a PPS credential.

Provide ongoing professional development regarding mental health for all school staff.

Teachers, other staff, and students themselves should be trained to identify early warning signs of mental health issues. LEAs must have a referral protocol that protects confidentiality but ensures the student in need will be connected to a responsible school-based mental health provider who can assess and refer or treat the student as appropriate. As one example, *Mental Health First Aid* is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues (<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>).



From "Communication Planning and Message Development: Promoting School-Based Mental Health Services" in *Communicé*, Vol. 35, No. 1. National Association of School Psychologists, 2006

[mentalhealthfirstaid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)). Teachers, staff, and students have been trained to recognize signs of common mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, listen non-judgmentally, and provide information and support strategies, and share resources for additional help.

Conclusion.

By working together with colleagues, school psychologists can meet many of the youth mental health challenges ahead. The task requires looking beyond burdensome caseloads and making time to think about mental health services at a systems level. As a first step, talk to colleagues, administrators, and school board members about using state and federal monies to increase PPS staff to *supplement, not supplant* existing school-based services. Remind decision-makers that "youth are six times more likely to complete evidence-based treatment when offered in schools than in community settings," making schools the best starting point for

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comprehensive prevention and early intervention services (NASP, n.d.). Consider adding temporary staff by contracting with Licensed Educational Psychologists and retired school psychologists who know school systems well. Work to ensure the LEA sets dedicated funding from state and local budgets for student mental health services. Medicaid can pay for mental health services for Medicaid-enrolled students. Consider leveraging state and federal funding streams (e.g. Title I, Title IV-A of ESSA; IDEA) to implement or scale up comprehensive school mental health systems. Explore available grant opportunities for which the school or district could apply. Inform decision-makers about the importance of sustainable school-community partnerships and how these partnerships support student mental health and success in school.

Working together, we can improve mental health outcomes for students.

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A Brief Introduction to Assessing Students with Visual Impairments

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Collaboration with Vision Specialists

Team collaboration is crucial to obtain meaningful data from the evaluation. During all phases of the evaluation (e.g., planning, administration, and interpretation), collaborate closely with the teacher of students with visual impairments (TSVI). TSVIs have expertise in visual impairments and their impacts on development and functioning but often do not have training in standardized norm-referenced assessments. TSVIs provide guidance on what the student can access visually, how to appropriately adapt activities and environments to provide access, what are the student's most appropriate learning media, and what assistive technology is necessary to facilitate the student's access and learning readiness. The first steps of the psychoeducational evaluation should be to review relevant educational and medical records and consult the TSVI. Consultation with the TSVI can provide information about etiology of the student's visual impairment and an overview of educational considerations, which can be extremely helpful. School psychology graduate training programs often provide brief information about low incidence disabilities that do not encompass the vast complexity and range of needs and essential considerations of working with students with visual impairments.

In order to validly interpret observational data and provide appropriate access to test materials, the Functional Vision Assessment and Learning Media Assessment (FVA/LMA) should be conducted first by the TSVI, so that any following evaluations are done with appropriate accommodations. The FVA/LMA examines students' visual functioning in a variety of environments and with varying tasks and determines needs related to adapted educational media. Though school psychologists may be quite knowledgeable of tests that may address the evaluation referral questions, consulting and collaborating with the TSVI will be essential to optimally set up the testing environment, determine tests the student can access meaningfully, and assist in interpretation of results and examination of error patterns. While some tests are available in large print and braille, these adapted versions may not be suitable for testing every student with a visual impairment. Information from the TSVI's FVA/LMA will provide critical information for choosing appropriate assessment tools, utilizing accommodations to provide access, and interpreting the results. Without this collaborative team approach, test results may be inappropriately interpreted and overestimate or underestimate a student's current abilities. Collaborating with the TSVI can help to determine if a given task, checklist, or rating scale is measuring the intended skill or behavior or simply a reflection of needs stemming from the visual impairment or other disabilities. Reflect on whether the intended ability is being measured or if access to learning materials and the environment is being measured.

While every evaluation regarding visual impairment must have a TSVI involved, many but not all evaluation teams include an orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist. Collaboration with O&M specialists is important to support a student's safety and independence on the school campus. O&M specialists evaluate use of sensory information in the community, self-protective techniques, guide techniques, spatial concept development, and long cane/adapted mobility device travel.

Both TSVIs and O&M specialists provide evaluation of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). Educational challenges for students with visual impairments extend beyond access to appropriate learning materials and learning travel skills. The ECC addresses the unique skills and needs stemming from low vision or blindness that students require in order to access the common core curriculum and participate meaningfully and independently in life. The ECC includes compensatory access, social interaction, orientation and mobility, independent living, recreation and leisure, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency, and self-determination (Allman & Lewis, 2014). In addition to the TSVIs' and O&M specialists' evaluations, school psychologists' assessments can contribute to various areas of the ECC, such as social interaction, independent living, recreation and leisure, career education, and self-determination. Social emotional assessment is important since youth with visual impairments are at increased risk of experiencing mental health challenges when compared with their sighted peers (Augestad, 2017; Kuld et al., 2020; Sims et al., 2018).

Use of a RIOT/ICEL Approach to Evaluation

Using a RIOT/ICEL problem solving approach to evaluation is recommended to facilitate a multimethod, multiple-informant approach to the evaluation and gather data across settings (e.g., physical environments and social environments) and time. RIOT stands for records review, interviews, observations, and testing while ICEL stands for instruction, curriculum, environment, and learner. Collection of meaningful data will lead to appropriate recommendations to support the student's independence and competency.

In addition, the RIOT/ICEL approach is part of bringing social justice practices into evaluations and shifts the focus beyond the learner and standardized assessments. School psychologists need to look beyond the numbers for meaningful data! Expanding the evaluation focus beyond scores and taking a comprehensive approach in considering ecological data points can drive meaningful goal creation, which is arguably the one of the most important parts of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Use of a RIOT/ICEL matrix can help shift the test-heavy narratives of evaluations to emphasize multiple sources of data about the instructional, curricular, and environmental factors impacting a student. Consider records review, interviews, observations, rating scales, and checklists as data points for cognitive and processing skills demonstrated. Review "[The RIOT/ICEL Matrix: Organizing Data to Answer Questions About Student Academic Performance & Behavior](#)" from Intervention Central for more information (Wright, 2010).

Resources to Continue Learning

This article provided a very brief introduction to evaluating students with visual impairments. To prepare for assessing students with low vision or blindness, review the following resources.

[Intelligence Testing of Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#) by Stephen Goodman, Marnee Loftin, and Dr. Carol Evans (2011)

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is posted on the American Printing House for the Blind website and is an excellent resource for guidance on testing students who are blind or visually impaired. Information from this document includes guidance on administering intelligence tests, facilitating adaptations, utilizing qualitative interpretation, reporting results, and more. It is highly recommended to review this guidance document before the evaluation.

In addition, the [Assessment Center website](#) (California School for the Blind, n.d.) is updated with the latest resources from the Assessment Center Team. The following are a selection of some resources school psychologists may find helpful.

Watch the recorded webinar [Psychoeducational Evaluations of Students with Visual Impairments](#) (Nguyen et al., 2021) to learn best practices that are essential for psychoeducational evaluations of students with visual impairments. The [webinar handout](#) (Nguyen et al., 2022) is a live document that gets updated regularly and contains many additional details beyond what is covered in the webinar. This document includes lists of tests to consider.

[CVI Self-Paced Short Course](#) (Herlich & Nguyen, 2021) is a free Google Classroom course that will provide an abundance of information about cerebral/cortical visual impairment. A Google account is required to access this course. Use an account with an @gmail.com email domain as a school or work email address with a different email domain may have problems with accessing the course.

[Psycho-educational Assessments in Children with Visual Impairments](#) (Engle et al., 2021) is a free LearningHub course designed for psychologists with expertise in psychoeducational assessment of children and adolescents. Learn to apply previously learned evaluation skills to assessing students with visual impairments. This course may also be helpful for TSVIs who are collaborating with psychologists. Registration for a free account is required to access the content.

Listen to a two-part series on [The Testing Psychologist, episodes 258](#) (Sharp, 2022) and [260](#) (Sharp, 2022), which includes a panel discussion about assessing children with visual impairments.

[BVIpsych](#) is an interactive listserv for school psychologists serving students who are blind or visually impaired. This forum offers a space to share resources and support one another, as the group strives to strengthen clinical skills and practices to assure quality assessments, interventions, and support services.

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Region II Update

By **Emily Bersaglia**,
Region II Representative

The Santa Clara County Association of School Psychologists (SCCASP) has a full lineup for the year. Check out the [event list](#) and join or renew your membership.

Keep an eye out for upcoming events hosted by the [Bay Area Association of School Psychologists \(BAASP\)](#).

Do you live or work in Monterey County? Do you wish there were more workshops for school psychologists in your area? [MCASP](#) needs YOU! Contact me if you want to help bring relevant professional development to Monterey County.



Region IV Update

By **Aimee Garcia Fuentes**,
Region IV Representative

The [Los Angeles Association of School Psychologists \(LAASP\)](#) had their first planning meeting for this school year. They are in the process of scheduling various activities and workshops that address behavior interventions in the class setting, emotional disturbance (identifying and supports), gatekeepers for LGBTQ+ students, and more. LAASP is working on membership drives and hopes that an increased awareness will bring new leadership.



Region III Update

By **Cassie Rivera**,
Region III Representative

Region III has two active affiliates: [CVA-CASP \(The Central Valley Association of School Psychologists\)](#) and [KASP \(The Kern Association of School Psychologists\)](#). KASP has 156 active members, and CVA-CASP has 263! Both affiliates are creating their training schedule for the 2022-2023 school year as they're being led by their presidents Ashley Trippel (CVA-CASP) and Bryan Morris (KASP).

KASP's training calendar for next school year includes multiple outstanding speakers. Some sessions will be in-person, and others via a hybrid model. KASP is also planning on community building events that will encourage members to network, socialize together, and engage in self-care activities.

CVA-CASP has Steven Feifer's stress/trauma follow up session tentatively planned for this school year.

Be sure to check out the affiliates' websites/social media for more registration information!

Instagram: [@kernasp](#);
Facebook: [Kern Association of School Psychologists](#);
<https://kernasp.wildapricot.org/>;
cva-casp.org

Region VI Update

By **Richard Kleindienst, PhD**,
Region VI Representative

The [Riverside Association of School Psychologist \(RASP\)](#) is proud to announce our new president, Gabriela DiGiovanni. She has been a school psychologist since 2001 and is currently a principal in the Murrieta Valley Unified School District. Ms. DiGiovanni brings a unique combination of clinical and administrative perspectives to the position; we look forward to her leadership. We also want to thank our outgoing president, Terri Foster, for her four-year tenure. During some of the most challenging times in in our profession, Ms. Foster steadily guided our board with her wisdom and support.

RASP will be sponsoring a legal workshop by Jennifer E Nix, Senior Associate General Counsel with the School & College Legal Services of California. The virtual workshop will be held on September 13, 2022, from 8:30-11:30 AM. With the goal of increasing our membership, the legal workshop will be free to all RASP members.



Region VII Update

By **Dorothy Guinter**,
Region VII Representative

On August 13th, the [San Diego County Association of School Psychologists \(SANDCASP\)](#) board members held the annual retreat/board meeting. SANDCASP board members went miniature golfing and participated in several icebreakers to help build relationships with one another.



Then the SANDCASP board started planning and coming up with great ideas for this coming year. The vibe was positive and energy was high! SANDCASP has some great professional development opportunities for the 2022-2023 school year. On September 9th, SANDCASP is pleased to announce that they will have Leah M. Smith, Associate General Counsel from SCLS present on Legally Defensible Assessments and Manifestation Determinations. The great news is if you are a SANDCASP member (and other local affiliates), this workshop is FREE! SANDCASP will have a multi-part Motivational Interviewing training series beginning in October. On November 17th, the legend Dr. Jerome Sattler will present on the 7th Edition of his book, "Foundations of Behavioral, Social, and Clinical Assessment of Children." Dr. Sattler will cover guidelines for conducting behavioral and personality assessments of children, COVID-19 and children's adjustment, and he will respond to questions.

Other future professional development opportunities will include a workshop that will focus on human trafficking, including specific issues that impact victims/survivors and how to effectively work with them in a client-centered, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed manner. This workshop will be held on January 18th by K Thomas from Project LIFE at North County Lifeline. In the spring, SANDCASP

plans to provide a training that will focus on Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) and lastly plans to have Dr. Steven Feifer present on his latest assessment, the Feifer Assessment of Childhood Trauma (FACT). SANDCASP will keep members posted as more details become available.

Region VIII Update

By **Dr. Ivan D. Alvarez**, EdD, MA,
LEP (with contributions from Sarah Rodriguez, Past VCASP President and Yolanda Mejia, CCASP President)

The [Ventura County Association of School Psychologists \(VCASP\)](#) is gearing up for the 2022-2023 school year!!! Upcoming trainings include:

- September 30 - Dyslexia with Jenny Ponzuric (half-day - 12:30-3:30pm)
- November 18 - SCES Assessments training provided in collaboration with VCSELPA (half day)
- December 16 - ED/AUT/OHI Assessments training provided in collaboration with VCSELPA (half day)

VCASP is an affiliate of CASP that is supported by local school psychologists. Those of us on the board work full time, just like you. We recognize the importance of providing relevant and meaningful professional development. However, we are working on a skeleton crew right now. We do not have a president or president elect. Almost everyone else on the board has already served as president or is brand new in their careers. If any of you recognize the importance of VCASP the way we do, please consider being on the board (not as president, just yet, but in some other capacity). The more people we have, the less work it is all around. And we are a fun bunch. Email Sarah Rodriguez at srodabler@gmail.com to find out how you can help.

The [Central Coast Association of School Psychologists \(CCASP\)](#) has a Migdas-2 Training coming up:

August 30th: Migdas-2 Training

***We will be raffling a free Migdas Kit for CCASP members! Register here: <https://ccasponline.org/membership>

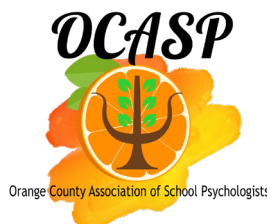
Another great event will be our SPAW-School Psych Networking Celebration 11/15/22, 8:30-10:30 in person at the SELPA Office. More details to come.

Region IX Update

By **Giniena Tan**, LEP,
Region IX Representative

Happy Fall!

The [Orange County Association of School Psychologists \(OCASP\)](#) is gearing up with continued



workshops for our region. They are planning for presentations in the fall (September) and spring (April) and continuing their frequently attended Annual Student Workshop in January/February. They are making connections with publishers and well-known presenters in our profession as we speak!

OCASP is also looking forward to collaborating with other affiliates to bring more professional learning opportunities to our region. With the virtual presentation formats, we can attend various workshops across the state! All you need to do is become a member of OCASP and [CASP](#)!

Lastly, OCASP is always looking for fresh ideas and new faces to join their Board. Check out the website for details: [OCASP](#) - it is a great way to meet other school psychologists throughout Orange County and share our expertise with each other for the better of our profession.

OCASP is grateful for your time and dedication into the work you do. You are extremely important to those students and families you work with, and we hope that you remember that throughout this school year.

We look forward to seeing you at our events this year!

Mahalo,
Giniena K. Tan
Region IX Representative



Region X Update

By Amy Merenda,
Region X Representative

Region X has three active affiliates. [The North-Eastern California Affiliate of School Psychologists \(NECASP\)](#), the [Delta Area Association of School Psychologists \(DAASP\)](#), and the [Elk Grove Regional Association of School Psychologists \(EGRASP\)](#).

NECASP currently has 36 members and is looking forward to their 2nd year of full operations! This coming year, NECASP is planning for four trainings, bi-monthly case collaborations, three in-person social events, and a bi-monthly preschool focus group. NECASP has high hopes for seeing their membership numbers grow this year and they feel strongly about connecting with their colleagues to help all members flourish! NECASP's new president is Michele Custer and is being supported by Brooke Matson (Past - President), Stephanie Hewitt (President-Elect/Social Media Administrator), Barbara Lewis Mill (Treasurer), Shietel Chhana (Membership Chair), Lidiya Badalyan (Secretary), and Natalie Cyhanenko (Webmaster). NECASP supports school psychologists in the Placer, El Dorado, Butte, Nevada, Yuba, Tehama, Shasta, Lassen, Glenn, Plumas, Sierra, Modoc, and Siskiyou counties. Check out NECASP and learn more by going to their website: www.necasp.org.

DAASP currently has 47 members and is very excited for the year ahead. They have a new executive board and are very excited to see how they can grow and improve in their roles and as an organization overall. DAASP is planning for workshops and social events in the coming months. DAASP's new president is Phoua Vang.

EGRASP currently has 120 members and has many trainings being planned for the coming year. EGRASP is also very proud to announce that it's very own President, Armando Fernandez, was named as the School Psychologist of the Year in Elk Grove Unified School District. EGRASP is very proud of this recognition for Armando!



Board Meeting Summary

By Michael Giambona

The new CASP convened for its first meeting on August 6th in San Diego. Several topics were covered and shared by the various board committee chairs. Currently, CASP is working with the state of California to provide guidance as they develop new mental health support personnel for schools. CASP is providing this guidance in conjunction with the school counselors association, school social workers associations, and community based organizations.

Several of CASP's committees shared their upcoming priorities for the year. The membership committee reported that last year CASP had approximately 1800 members and this year have the goal to reach 2700 active members. Remember to ask your colleagues if they are members and if not to encourage them to sign up. Currently our Mental Wellness Committee is developing a list of experts that can provide ongoing training to school districts on a variety of mental health techniques employed by school psychologists.

This year CASP will continue to host monthly Couch Chats for members on a variety of topics. If you have any specific topics you would like to see covered please reach out to your region rep with your ideas. Additionally, if you would like to become more involved with CASP through committees or volunteer work please let your Region Rep know!



Membership Committee

By Sarah Rodriguez and
Emily Bersaglia, Membership
Committee Co-Chairs

Did you know there are approximately 6,500 school psychologists practicing in California? And there are over 1,800 CASP members, which includes students. As the Membership Co-Chairs, we wonder why more school psychologists are not members. Is CASP not providing what school psychologists are looking for? Are school psychologists getting professional development from other places aside from CASP? Or maybe they are not engaging in professional development? These are questions we ask at our Membership Committee meetings every other month. We talk about the many ways we can better meet the needs of school psychologists. If you have ideas or would like to support us in these efforts, please email us at srodabler@gmail.com or emilybersaglia@gmail.com.



Assessment Committee

By May Nguyen, MS, LEP, NCSP,
ACUE, Assessment Committee
Co- Specialist

This year the Assessment Specialist position will be served by Co-Assessment Specialists, James Hiramoto and May Nguyen and be supported by an ad-hoc committee. This shift from an individual person is to improve response time to CASP members' questions as well as increase the collective knowledge resources to address these questions. As CASP develops their new website, the Co-Assessment Specialists and ad-hoc committee plan to update past FAQs and include new questions to be included on the site. In addition, the Assessment Committee has a goal to create infographics for some of our top FAQs. Keep an eye out on CASP's social media for a few infographics this year! If you are interested in being part of the Assessment ad-hoc Committee, [click here](#).



CASP Student Representatives 2022 – 2023

By **Brian P. Leung, Ph.D.**,
Student Leadership Chair

For the upcoming academic year, student voice will be represented by three Student Representatives from north, central, and southern California. Each was highly recommended by their program faculty. The responsibilities of the Student Representatives are to connect with school psychology students across all CA training programs to:

- report on CASP and board activities.
- solicit input from school psychology students for board consideration.
- offer feedback on CASP events to meet student needs.

They will also help me to collaborate with school psychology students across the state via the CASP Student Leader Program. I am delighted to share the brief bios of each of the representatives below. Feel free to contact me (bleung@lmu.edu) and any of the Student Representatives if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions to support our students!



Tricia Choy is a fourth-year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at UC Riverside. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from University of California,

Los Angeles. Her research interest focuses on underlying neural correlates related to social skills, executive functioning, and empathy and how the family unit impacts socialization in youth with autism. She especially enjoys working within a multi-disciplinary team to provide a holistic approach to care for students and families. In her free time, she loves hiking, going to the beach and trying new foods with her friends and family. Email: tchoy002@ucr.edu



Quennie Dong (she/her/hers) is a second-year doctoral student in the School Psychology Ph.D. program at UC Berkeley. She is passionate about advocating for

marginalized youth through the lens of social justice and cultural humility. Her current research interests include exploring how intergenerational trauma impacts youth and how culturally affirming social-emotional learning (SEL) can promote collective resilience. A fun fact about Quennie is that she has a four-year-old golden retriever named Dundie because The Office is her favorite television show. Email: qdong@berkeley.edu



Bryan Wilcots is in his 2nd year of the Fresno State Ed.S. in School Psychology Graduate Program. He is the central California Student Representative to the CASP board. While playing football at Chaffey Community College, Bryan worked as a security guard and covered events such as Jay-Z's and Beyoncé's On the Run Tour, Ed Sheeran's Divided Tour, and the 2018 Los Angeles Rams vs Kansas City Chiefs Monday Night Football game. Email: brybry15@mail.fresnostate.edu

Professional Development Committee

By **Terri Foster**, Professional Learning Committee Chair

The CASP Professional Learning Committee has been preparing both CEU-eligible webinars and Couch Chats for the 2022-2023 school year. At

this time, our plan is to have one webinar per month, except for October (the month of Convention) and one Couch Chat per month.

Jerome Sattler will be doing a [webinar](#) in September on his new book. Other topics of interest were noted to be with student anxiety, executive function and anti-racist practices.

We had a Mental Health Couch Chat scheduled for September 2 with Tom Sapp and Stephanie Murray. Upcoming Couch Chats will be on LGBTQ+ issues, facilitating effective conversations in an IEP and Larry P. We look forward to developing more webinars and Couch Chats. If you have other topics you would like us to address, please contact Terri Foster at terif312@gmail.com.

IDEAL Committee

By **Katie Pettersen and Nel Romo**,
IDEAL Committee Co-Chairs

Nel Romo and Katie Pettersen are co-leading the IDEAL Committee for the 2022-2023 school year. The IDEAL Committee, which encompasses Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Liberation, is focused on ensuring that we as school psychologists are equipped with tools to promote cultural awareness and humility, advocate for the needs of diverse students and families, and uplift the voices of our students and families who have historically been silenced or ignored. We recognize that in order to do that, we first need to reflect on our own practices. As such, Nel and Katie will work with the IDEAL Committee to conduct an internal analysis of our organization and board, to ensure that we are 'walking the walk' when it comes to living out the CASP vision of supporting equity, access, and respect for all. This will start with Nel and Katie attending the "Recharging Leader Momentum for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policies & Practices (RLM EDI 2.0)," put on by NASP. From there, the IDEAL Committee will create an action plan with the tools provided by the training, and systematically utilize these tools to promote DEI within CASP.

Couch Chats 2022-23

We are truly better together and want to provide a safe space to ask questions and learn from each other. The first Friday of each month (September-June), CASP will be hosting Couch Chats on a variety of topics. This year they will be open to both member and non-members; free for CASP members, \$29 for non-members. Get comfy on the couch, grab your lunch, and join us virtually!

NASP Update

By Maureen Schroeder,
NASP Delegate

Why is it that summer, a time devoted to slowing down, always goes so fast? It seems like we just wrapped up our end-of-year evaluations and other tasks, and yet here we are with most of summer behind us and looking forward to the new school year.

I think NASP President Celeste Malone's theme "Radical Hope, Authentic Healing" provides a helpful lens through which to view the new school year. I know challenges lie ahead, but so does the opportunity to establish goals and expectations for our work so that we can do what's best for our students and school communities. We all benefit from the ability to tap into hope, envision a world in which all students thrive, and identify concrete ways in which we can improve our work and help shape the systems that will support positive school experiences.

Being concrete is helpful. The following are a few suggestions that might help focus your efforts.

- **Create a professional growth plan.** It is important to target the skills we need most and map out a plan for acquiring them. Take the [NASP Self-Assessment](#) to identify skill areas needing additional professional development and establish goals for expanding your current role. Pay close attention to what skills are needed to address issues of equity and social justice. The [NASP Professional Growth Plan](#) template can assist you in creating a proactive, structured, and data-based plan of activities to support the targeted areas of professional development and growth. And you can earn NASP-approved CPD credit in the process!
- **Brush up on critical topics with NASP podcasts.** Listening to a podcast is an easy way to refresh current skills or learn a new approach from school psychology experts. Examples of recent NASP podcast topics include [Embedding Executive Skills Into Daily Classroom Routines and Instruction](#) with Peg Dawson, [How to Use MTSS for Better Results](#) with Amanda VanDerHeyden, [What to Do When an Intervention Does Not Work](#) with Matt Burns, [Restorative Justice to Promote](#)

[Equity and Connectedness](#) with Margaret Sedor and Merisol Rerucha, and [Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#) with Bryon McClure. There is also a terrific set of webinars/podcasts for [graduate students](#) that addresses topics ranging from publishing your dissertation to [Responding to Graduate Student Needs for Equity, Antiracism, and Social Justice](#).

- **Remember, you stand on firm ground.** School psychologists' professional standards are a solid foundation for providing and advocating for appropriate and ethical practice. This can be particularly important when tackling issues of systemic racism and injustice. NASP's position statements, such as [Promoting Just Special Education Identification and School Discipline Practices](#), provide guidance and authority. It can also be helpful to reground yourself in our ethical problem-solving model. The podcast series and set of worksheets on [Using the Ethical Problem Solving to Respond to Racism](#) is a terrific resource to use individually or as a team.

NASP has many, many more resources that can help inform and support your efforts to shape your individual practice and the systems within which you work. And on that note, I'd like to share that [CASP's annual convention](#) is just around the corner. Registration is now open. CASP President Melissa Wood's convention theme is "**Advocate. Activate. Advance.**" and is set to take place in Universal City, Ca., in-person, on October 12-15th. This is the biggest and best state conference for school psychologists! This conference will offer professional development and continuing education for school psychologists, licensed educational psychologists (LEPs), and Nationally Certified School Psychologists (NCSPs). There will be 75+ professional development sessions on a wide variety of relevant topics, such as Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Assessments, Executive Functioning Assessment, Mental Health Support for Students, Ethics, LGBTQ+ issues Impacting Schools, Evidence-Based Strategies for Students on the Spectrum, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Prevention, How to Become an LEP, Best Practice in the Assessment of Emotional Disturbance, plus many more! In addition to the professional development opportunities, there will be a General Session and Keynote with Senator Anthony

Portantino, Welcome/Awards Dinner, Fun Run, CASP Board Committee Meetings, A Coffee Chats with our Board experts, and tons of networking opportunities!

"We look forward to hosting the school psychologists in California for three days of learning, networking, and reviving their passion for school psychology!"

-CASP President, Melissa Wood.

I look forward to sharing more as the year gets underway. Until then, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly if I can be of help.

Have a great rest of your summer.



Mental Wellness Committee

By Stephanie Murray and
Tom Sopp, Mental Wellness
Committee Co-Chairs

The CASP Mental Wellness Committee is excited for the new school year, and the work we will be doing to support our members in the realm of mental wellness for students, families, those we work with, as well as our own school psychologists/members. We are continuing to work on goals including establishing a data base/list of presenters on a variety of mental wellness related topics that schools and districts can access to provide trainings in their areas of need, as well as aggregating information gained from the recent member survey regarding training needs and desires to be provided by CASP. We have just determined our tentative meeting schedule for the year, so anyone interested in working with us is asked to complete the [interest form](#) on the CASP website!



Getting to Know Dorothy Guinter, New Region VII Representative

By Kendall Bare, Membership and Communications Coordinator

CASP is pleased to welcome Dorothy Guinter, our new Region VII Representative. Dorothy is grateful for the opportunities CASP membership has provided her, particularly in the areas of professional development, current resources, and networking, and is excited to give back through her new role!

“The professional development has really been amazing, especially when it comes to conventions. There are so many different opportunities and topics, so that has been huge for me,” shared Dorothy. “Another big piece has been the ability meet school psychologists from all throughout California. It’s always nice to hear what’s going on in other school districts and have a chance to

talk through professional challenges.”

Dorothy deeply respects everyone she’s met through CASP and has admired their involvement in the field and commitment to continued professional growth. So, when Kristin Singh, the previous Region VII Rep moved to Washington earlier this year, Dorothy decided to take her CASP involvement to the next level.

When asked what she looks forward to the most in this new chapter, Dorothy said, “I very much look forward to building friendships and connections with other CASP members from all over California. I think taking on this role will also improve my leadership skills, especially when it comes to working in a non-profit organization.”

Dorothy loves school psychology and feels that this new role will make her value the field even more. She appreciates that the profession is ever evolving. “There’s so much to it. It’s not just about a learning disability



or autism; there’s a lot of different layers involved when it comes to being a school psychologist,” she shared. “What I think is cool about this field is you can pick what your niche is and what you want to focus on and find a school district that meets that need for you. Mental health is something that I’m passionate about, so I’ve taken on the role as an ERMHS school psychologist in my district where I do most of the social emotional counseling.”

Something that would surprise you about Dorothy? She was born in Poland and arrived in the United States as a six-year-old refugee. She brings a great deal of compassion from lived experience to her practice.

When she’s off the clock, you can find her at a moe. concert (her favorite band that she’s seen over 80 times!) Thank you for all you do Dorothy. We’re excited to have you in this role!



Getting to Know Melissa Wood, CASP’s 2022-24 President

By Kendall Bare, Membership and Communications Coordinator

CASP is pleased to welcome Melissa Wood, M. Ed., M. S., PPS, as our 2022-24 President! Having joined the association shortly after becoming a school psychologist, Melissa has been supported by this community every step of the way. “It (CASP) immediately opened my mind to best practice, great training, and the kind of people I should go to when engaged in very intricate assessments,” she shared. “I’ll have a question that pertains to the job I’m currently in, and I can reach out to people all over the state who can help with answers and resources, and that has been very beneficial to my career.”



Melissa has extensive experience implementing mental health services to students, creating district-wide crisis response protocols, and collaborating with community agencies to facilitate support to families. Her background includes working in districts in San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Bakersfield as a general education teacher, intervention specialist, school psychologist, and administrator. She received her bachelor’s degree and teaching credential at California State University, San Luis Obispo, CA. (Cal Poly), and holds master’s degrees in Curriculum Development and School Psychology.

While pursuing various leadership positions within CASP, Melissa has been encouraged by her colleagues, including her friend and CASP Membership Committee Co-Chair, Sarah Rodriguez, who initially convinced her to become a region representative five years ago. What inspired her to accept the nomination for President-Elect? The prospect of collaborating with exceptional fellow board members, who each bring something innovative and unique to the table.

While she’s currently the Director of Special Education Programs for Panama-Buena Vista Union School District and teaches preschool and processing assessment, Melissa remains incredibly passionate about school psychology, and finds fulfillment in working closely with students and their families. When asked about her favorite aspect of her current role, Melissa shared, “The human piece is what I really enjoy about my job. I love special education so I can’t imagine leaving this field.” Previously, she served as a SELPA Coordinator for the Kern County Consortium SELPA, where she supported over 48 member districts in areas of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), data compliance, and professional development.

Melissa knows firsthand the value of providing every child with the resources necessary to thrive. Raised by her grandparents who were migrant farm workers, she was an EL student in school. “I spoke English and Spanish from a very young age. It’s not something I use very often now, but it’s something that when I’m around those who speak Spanish, I fall into it quite easily.”

Thank you, Melissa, for sharing your talents, perspective, and heart with Team CASP! We look forward to seeing where your leadership guides our organization.



A Message from the President

By Melissa Wood

CASP President 2022



Melissa Wood

Welcome to the 2022-23 school year! This chapter is poised to be one of healing, transition, and hope! As we embark on this new term, whether this is your first, or 25th year as a school psychologist, know that you bring with you a wealth of knowledge and skill that can address a wide-range of student needs, and your training is exactly what education needs right now! School psychologists are more than testing machines and we come with a variety of knowledge in mental health, consultation, behavior, and special education law, just to name a few! School psychologists truly are the "Swiss Army Knife" of educators.

It's no secret that this school year brings all of the confusion and struggle from the past few years. We are still working to address issues from the pandemic and a year of distance learning. But this year also brings hope. As Roy T. Bennett from "The Light in The Heart" once said, "Never lose hope. Storms make people stronger and never last forever." Remember that as you return to school, addressing the sky-high pile of assessment requests that may sit on your desk; every day is an opportunity to move forward and pass through the temporary "storm."

As I worked with the CASP board when designing this year's annual convention, we wanted to make sure we created a theme that embodied the spirit of a school psychologist. This year's theme, "Advocate. Activate. Advance." was crafted to communicate how school psychologists are natural advocates for children; how they are often at the forefront of change in school systems; and how those actions also produce change to help advance our field. In addition, this year's convention is designed to address the needs of school psychologists, whether they are brand new or 25-year-veterans, in over 75 different professional development opportunities. All of this is intended to address the complexities within our field and your needs as you work tirelessly as advocates for children. It is my honor to work with the CASP Board of Directors, specialists and committee chairs to create a convention dedicated to the work of those I so much admire, including you!



CASP Corporate Members:



A Message from the Executive Director

By Melanee Cottrill

Welcome back to school! I hope you enjoyed a restful summer and were able to return to work recharged and ready to support your students. Team CASP has been hard at work making your voice heard in the Capitol and getting ready for our upcoming annual convention – I hope to see you there! Here's a roundup of our major projects.

New! Tuition Grants for Aspiring School Psychologists

You know that becoming a school psychologist isn't easy. The program is intensive, which makes it expensive - often prohibitively so. School psychologists exist in a unique space intersecting the health and education fields, which means you are left out of many grant and scholarship programs. CASP's advocacy team has been dedicated to breaking down these barriers, attacking the challenge from every angle. We're thrilled to announce that one of our top priority requests has been included in this year's state budget - the Golden State Teacher Preparation Grant program is being expanded to include those seeking a PPS credential! For students, that means you'll soon be able to apply for up to \$20,000 in grants to help with your education. We'll share more information when it becomes available. Thank you to all our members - your membership makes advocacy work like this possible.

CYBHI Update

[In our last issue](#), we featured two full length articles on the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative. The Initiative is a \$4.7 billion investment by the state intended to reimagine the behavioral health system for youth ages 0-25, encompassing [a wide variety of programs and projects](#). Governor Newsom recently touted the initiative in a [recorded press conference](#).

CASP's advocacy work on various components of the Initiative continues in full force. There are currently two key elements in progress.

Behavioral Health Coaches: Several CASP representatives attended working sessions in late July to continue the conversation around behavioral health coaches. Staff from the Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS) followed the working group sessions with an informational webinar on the updated coach proposal in August. In the informational webinar, it became apparent that DHCS was under the mistaken impression that some PPS credential holders hold only a Bachelor's Degree and were therefore not qualified to supervise coaches. CASP and our partners quickly pointed out the error on the informational webinar and followed up by talking to DHCS leadership and submitting a formal letter detailing the educational requirements to obtain a PPS credential. We also continue to have conversations with DHCS regarding the sustainability of this new coach position, with particular focus on ensuring it does not divert funding away from existing (your) positions.

Fee Schedule: Another significant element of the initiative is a to-be-developed fee schedule. The fee schedule will be a "school-linked statewide fee schedule for outpatient mental health or substance use disorder provided to a student...at a school site." It will also develop a school-linked statewide provider network and require commercial health plans and Medi-Cal managed care plans to reimburse providers for treatment at a school site. A workgroup is being formed to advise development of the fee schedule. CASP and our coalition of education organizations are working with DHCS leadership to ensure PPS credential holders knowledgeable in billing issues are included in this workgroup.

An [update on the full initiative](#) was published in August by DHCS.



Melanee Cottrill

Being Remarkable

In early August, our leadership team met for their annual retreat. Thirty of CASP's extraordinarily dedicated board members, committee chairs, specialists, and staff spent two days together brainstorming, planning, and coming up with ways to make your membership even more worthwhile. The result was a two-year plan to push CASP towards being a truly remarkable association...hence the moniker Remarkable Plan. Our team will be focusing on three key priorities for the next two years:

1. Identify ways to engage with customers and improve our products and services.
2. Create a framework for increasing dialogue and engagement within and outside CASP.
3. Be more adaptive in the areas of social media and technology in order to meet members' needs.

Committee Volunteers

We have such amazing members! Thank you to everyone who answered the call to join one of our committees. We're welcoming more than a dozen new faces across several of our committees. Many of the great things CASP does – from writing position papers, to putting on the annual convention, to making sure your membership is valuable and rewarding – happen at the committee level.



CASP Legislative Update

Legislature Enters Final Weeks of Session and CDC Updated Guidance

By Andrea Ball & Laura Wasco, Ball Frost Group LLC



© Steven Pavlov

As the 2022-23 school year gets underway in communities across the state, Sacramento lawmakers enter the final 2 weeks of the legislative session.

August 11th marked an important milestone for bills: the Appropriations Committees in both the Senate and Assembly held Suspense File hearings and dispensed with over 800 bills. The large majority (75% by some accounts) passed out of committees, some with substantial amendments. Four bills that CASP was actively working on successfully made it off of the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense file. Two of the bills focus on pupil health mental health and meeting student needs. Below are summaries:

- **AB 58 (Salas)** would require a local educational agency, on or before June 1, 2025, to review and update its policy on pupil suicide prevention, and revise its training materials, to incorporate best practices identified by the CDE in the department's model policy.
- **AB 2124 (Garcia)** would require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop the Pupil Peer Support Training Program and administer grants on a competitive basis to local education agencies (LEAs) serving pupils in grades 9 to 12. CASP was successful in getting the bill amended to require that the training and ongoing supervision of any peer support training programs be conducted by school staff holding a Pupil Personnel Services credential.

The other CASP supported bills to continue to move in the legislative process focus on school safety and how to deploy mental health professionals in a timely manner when a county experiences a traumatic event or natural disaster. **AB 2072 (Gabriel)** encourages LEAs to coordinate agreements between school districts and charter schools within the county to develop a mutual aid system in which qualified mental health professionals or other key personnel could be rapidly deployed

on short or long term basis to an areas of that county that has experienced a natural disaster or traumatic event in order to provide necessary support to students and staff.

AB 99 (Irwin) would require the governing board of a school district to adopt policies within the comprehensive school safety plan for the establishment of a crisis intervention and targeted violence prevention program that assists in the identification and assessment of pupils whose behavior may indicate a threat that is not imminent to the health and safety of pupils, school staff, or other community members and that provides referrals to appropriate services. CASP has been working closely with Assembly Member Irwin's staff to make sure that this new requirement in the school safety plan can successfully be implemented in the schools and that mental health professionals are part of the crisis intervention and targeted violence prevention program.

Over the next two weeks, the Legislature will be focusing on Floor sessions to consider and vote on the bills that made it out of the Senate and Assembly Suspense files. The last day to amend bills on the floor is August 25th and the last day of the Legislative Session is August 31st. The Governor has until September 30th to sign or veto any bill that makes it through the legislative process and makes it to the final stop on the Governor's Desk.

Legislative action by the Governor

As part of a larger legislative package designed to protect Californians from gun violence, the Governor signed into law **SB 906 (Portantino)** which is aimed at improving school campus safety. The bill has several provisions: (1) beginning in 2023-24 school year, requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to annually provide information to parents or guardians of pupils K-12 about California's child access prevention laws and laws relating to the safe storage of firearms; (2) requires school officials who interact with students in grades 6 - 12, to report to law enforcement any

threat or perceived threat; and (3) requires law enforcement or the school police to conduct an investigation and threat assessment, including a review of Department of Justice's (DOJ's) firearm registry and a search of the school and/or students' property by law enforcement or school police. [Governor Newsom signed SB 906 on July 21, 2022.](#) CASP Legislative Committee had a "watch" position on the bill.

CDC updated guidance

On Thursday August 11th, the federal CDC issued [updated guidance on COVID-19. Reported changes](#) related to schools include no longer recommending cohorting or test-to-stay strategies for students and a de-emphasis on social distancing. *At this writing, the California Department of Public Health Safe Schools for All Team has NOT issued updates/commentary on the CDC guidance. Please confer with local and county public health officials for impact if any of the updated CDC Guidance.*



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Governor Newsom and First Partner Highlight State Efforts to Support Children and Youth Mental Health

By Ball/Frost Group

On August 18th Governor Newsom, joined by First Partner, outlined the [California Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health](#), and a number of multi-year programs and efforts the state is undertaking with a \$4.7 billion (non-98) investment. Much of this work is being done under auspices of the California Health and Human Services Agency and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). We know that student mental health and social-emotional learning are top-of-mind for school system leaders and your advocates Laura Wasco and Andrea Ball of Ball/Frost Group participate in regular meetings with the lead representatives of CHHS and associated departments who are responsible for the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CHBHI).

Below is an update shared by DHCS shortly after the Governor's announcement which provides a nice summary of the various elements of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative.

Governor Unveils California's Strategy to Support Youth Mental Health; Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) is a Key Component <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/publications/oc/Pages/DHCSStakeholderNews/081922StakeholderUpdate.aspx>

On August 18 in Fresno, Governor Gavin Newsom discussed California's Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health. He said, "Mental and behavioral health is one of the greatest challenges of our time...The Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health is premised on a very simple belief: every single kid deserves to have their mental health supported."

One of the key components of the Master Plan is CYBHI, a multiyear, multi-department package of investments that reimagines the systems that support behavioral health for all California's children, youth, and their families. Efforts focus on promoting social and emotional well-being, preventing behavioral health challenges, and providing equitable, appropriate, timely, and accessible services for emerging and existing behavioral health needs for children and youth ages 0-25.

The \$4.7 billion investment of state General Funds for CYBHI will improve access to behavioral health services for all children and youth in California, regardless of payer. Moreover, it will have significant implications for the Medi-Cal program since 5.4 million (approximately 54 percent) children and youth are enrolled in Medi-Cal. CYBHI will improve and change the way Medi-Cal's children and youth access behavioral health service—virtually, through their communities and schools, and through their existing relationships with Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCP) and county behavioral health plans.

As a component of CYBHI, DHCS will build and drive adoption of the Behavioral Health Virtual Services Platform for all children, youth, and families in California, regardless of payer. The platform will support the delivery of equitable, appropriate, and timely behavioral health services from prevention to treatment to recovery and provide an e-Consult platform for pediatric and primary care providers to connect with BH providers.

CYBHI also includes statewide efforts that will make it easier for

children, youth, and young adults to access behavioral health services in California's schools. By January 1, 2024, DHCS, in collaboration with the California Department of Managed Health Care (DHMC), will develop and maintain:

- A school-linked statewide fee schedule to reimburse outpatient mental health and substance use disorder services provided to a student, 25 years of age or younger, at or near a school-site;
- A school-linked statewide provider network of school-site behavioral health counselors.

The statewide all-payer fee schedule for school-linked BH services will provide a specific scope of benefits and rate requirements for commercial health plans and the Medi-Cal delivery systems, which will be required to reimburse providers at the established rates for providing services to students. Establishing the fee schedule will streamline and facilitate reimbursement for school-based behavioral health services, thereby expanding the scope of behavioral health services provided to students at, or near, school sites, and improving access to services and outcomes for children, youth, and young adults.

DHCS is leading the following additional efforts to expand access to school-linked behavioral health services:

The Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program (SBHIP) provides incentive payments, totaling \$389 million over a three-year period (January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2024), to Medi-Cal MCPs to build sustainable partnerships and infrastructure between MCPs, Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), and counties to:

- Improve coordination of student behavioral health (BH) services;
- Increase preventive and early intervention BH services for transitional kindergarten to 12 grade students;
- Increase non-specialty mental health services on/near school campuses;
- Increase access to BH services on/near school campuses and/or through school-affiliated BH providers.

DHCS will provide direct School-linked Partnership and Capacity Grants to support new services to individuals 25 years of age and younger from schools, providers in school, school-affiliated community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based health centers. By improving capacity, partnerships, and infrastructure, DHCS will continue to expand access to school-based services for students. The grants will be designed to support the implementation of the statewide all-payer fee schedule in 2024.

Through its CalHOPE initiative, DHCS is investing in social and emotional learning (SEL) environments for children and youth in school settings. The Department is contracting with the Sacramento County Office of Education (COE), which has memorandums of understanding with all 57 other COEs across the state, to lead implementation efforts, including establishing a statewide SEL Community of Practice. Each COE is developing a needs assessment

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Governor Newsom and First Partner Highlight State Efforts to Support Children and Youth Mental Health

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and action plan to expand SEL strategies.

Effective January 2023, Medi-Cal will cover integrated physical and behavioral health screenings and services for the whole family, not just the child who is the identified patient. This expansion is especially important for families in which the child is enrolled in Medi-Cal but the parent or caregiver is uninsured, and yet there is a need for dyadic treatment. Dyadic services involve simultaneous treatment for the child and parent/caregiver, with studies showing significant improvements in child behavior issues and increases in positive parent/child attachment. These services will include a number of screenings, assessment, evaluation, and case management, in addition to integrated BH services, tobacco cessation counseling, and alcohol and/or drug use Screening, Brief Interventions and Referral to Treatment.

In addition, with input from stakeholders, DHCS will select a limited number of evidence-based practices (EBPs) and community-defined practices (CDPs) to scale throughout the state based on robust evidence for effectiveness, impact on racial equity, and sustainability. Medi-Cal MCPs, county BH plans, Medi-Cal providers and Indian Health programs would then be eligible to receive funding for scaling up these practices. By scaling EBPs and CDPs throughout the state, DHCS aims to improve access to critical BH interventions, including those focused on prevention, early intervention and resiliency/recovery, for children and youth, specifically focused on children and youth from Black, Indigenous, and people of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex+ communities.

To provide comments, make recommendations, or obtain additional information about the CYBHI, please email CYBHI@dhcs.ca.gov.



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–Attorney Carl Corbin



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Our quarterly newsletter *CASP Today* encourages the publication of high quality and professionally relevant articles. Submissions may include articles, commentaries, book reviews, or any other writing that promotes the professional practice of school psychology. Submissions from parents, advocates, administrators, and individuals interested in working with school psychologists to improve education for all children are especially encouraged. All submissions should be sent electronically to kendallb@casponline.org at least 1 month prior to the publication deadline. CASP reserves the right to determine suitability for publication and the right to edit for length. Permission shall be obtained from the author(s) to print submissions that have been substantially reduced.



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Calendar – closing dates:

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Spring 2023: March 24, 2023

Summer 2023: June 30, 2023

Fall 2023: September 1, 2023

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