

OSPA TODAY



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President's Message

Joining the Team

It's the beginning of another school year, and by now I'm sure that each of you is well entrenched in your jobs. I wanted to take a moment to share some news from OSPA with you.

First, I would like to announce OSPA's Executive Board election results that took place in the spring. I appreciate you taking the time to cast a vote and voice your opinion. After all, this is your association and you choose the board who will manage the association. Congratulations go to Susan Linde as our new President-Elect. Susan is a school psychologist in Broken Arrow Public Schools. You also elected Marty Yadon as your Secretary, Heather Murphy as Treasurer-Elect, Sandra Reese-Keck as Northwest Representative, Teresa Knight as Central Representative, Laurie Frans as Southwest Representative, Claire Putnam as Southeast Representative, and Jan Odom as Northeast Representative. I am looking forward to working with each of these wonderful individuals this year, and think we have an excellent team!

I attended the State Presidents meeting at our NASP convention in Atlanta, Georgia, in March. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting other state leaders and hearing their triumphs and concerns in their own states. In fact, many concerns that each of us has in Oklahoma (such as Response to Intervention and how to apply it) is of equal concern across the nation. I got several things from this meeting. First of all, I have made contacts in several states that may be able to assist us in developing and implementing techniques that apply to the new federal regulations. Secondly, I realized how much OSPA is doing for school psychologists in this state. We have come a long way, but we have much more to accomplish. Thirdly, the meeting really made me think about you, the members, and what the board and I can do for you.

I have heard that sometimes an Executive Board may be perceived as an exclusive club...a club that is nearly impossible for an outsider to break into. I consider myself a newcomer to the board. Do you know how I ended up on the board? I volunteered to help with a small task one day. This is what the board is really about. It's a small group of people who each chip in and tackle one job. Was I reluctant when I was nominated to be on the board? Absolutely! My concerns included time constraints, the demands of a board position as well as career and family obligations. These were my perceptions, whether they were right or wrong. What do I think now that I have been an active board member for four years? I am so happy that I have become an active member of this community! I have never met a group of individuals who are so caring, helpful, supportive, intelligent, and focused. We have only about four meetings a year, so we are able to fulfill our other obligations in life. One of my goals as President this year was to bring in new individuals to our board, and we have several

people who have said 'Yes!' to the job. We have clearly defined duties for every position, as well as expertise from the past to support us. You don't have to reinvent the wheel to be on the board...you just have to say 'Yes!' Our board meetings are not solely focused on government and legislative issues either. You could help out just by being on the conference committee and brainstorming ideas for future conferences, or by dreaming up an innovative way to promote school psychology!

Do you know what OSPA's goals are for our future? Do you know what we've accomplished lately? Some of our priorities that we have outlined in our strategic plan include: Increasing our political involvement through key legislators and assistance from our lobbyist, promoting a full service model of school psychology, establishing a provisional certification for the internship year, revising the examination procedures for school psychologists to include only the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in school psychology, developing a consortium or unified school psychology preservice preparation program across the four state training institutions, promoting the image of school psychologists through media, providing training and support for psychometrists to become school psychologists with a paid internship year, and linking with other professional organizations and business groups. We have already accomplished recognition of Nationally Certified School Psychologists in the state, and we have been strongly aligned with the Oklahoma Speech and Hearing Association for the past few years. As you can see, we have much more to accomplish in the near future. I hope I can count on you to help us obtain our goals. Please contact me if you would like to consider joining our team or even visit our next board meeting on February 18th to find out what we are about.

Cindie Milford, President

Congratulations to Kim Dixon

Kim Dixon, School Psychologist for Putnam City Schools, recently received her National Certification in School Psychology (NCSP) from NASP. Kim completed her school psychology program at the University of Central Oklahoma.

IDEA 2004 Proposed Regulations Released

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) officially released the proposed regulations for the recently reauthorized IDEA 2004 on June 21, 2005. Download a copy at the NASP website's IDEA information page:

[http:// www.nasponline.org/advocacy/IDEAinformation.html](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/IDEAinformation.html).

Additional departmental regulatory information is available at :

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.lhtml>

Prevention is an Intervention

***By Mary Sweet-Darter, Ph.D.
University of Central Oklahoma***

The University of Central Oklahoma's School Psychology program has taken NASP's 2006 convention theme to heart. Researchers are working alongside the Oklahoma Council for Educational Leadership as part of the national www.just4kids.com project to identify promising practices used in high-challenge schools.

A high-challenge school is one that serves high numbers of students receiving free and reduced lunch and/or high numbers of English language learners. By identifying "what works" in high-challenge schools and sharing these "best practices" with other high-challenge schools across the state, researchers hope to increase academic achievement for all students and reduce the number of referrals for psycho-educational and behavioral assessments. During the school year 2004-2005, the UCO research team went into 15 high challenge elementary schools using a national two-day research protocol.

The present study sought to identify practices that differentiated average performing high-challenged elementary schools, those earning CRT scores in the 40 to 60 % range, from those earning CRT scores at or above the 85 % mark. It is important to emphasize that the differences found between average and high performing high-challenged Oklahoma elementary schools are best described as subtle. For example, both average and high performing high challenged Oklahoma elementary schools align their curriculum to PASS objectives, with the difference between average and high performance represented by degrees of alignment rather than substantive differences in the way alignment is approached.

Admittedly, greater differences would have likely surfaced if the study had compared low performing high challenge elementary schools with high performing ones; however, the purpose of this project was to identify the variables separating good and best practices in high-challenge elementary schools.

Results were summarized around the major themes provided by National Council for Educational Accountability at the University of Texas through the just4kids national project. An October 23 conference sponsored by CCOSA and OCEL, to be held at Metro Tech in Oklahoma City, will highlight those best practices identified in high achieving high-challenge Oklahoma elementary schools. High challenge elementary schools across Oklahoma as well as other interested school personnel are invited to attend. It is hoped that high-challenge elementary schools will send a team (district administrator, building administrator and teacher) as well as other personnel who have an investment in helping high-challenge elementary schools improve student achievement.

While detailed results of the project can be found in the book ***What Works: Oklahoma Best Practice*** obtainable through CCOSA (Cooperative Council of School Administrators) and abbreviated findings can be found in an upcoming edition of ***Oklahoma Association for Supervision and Curriculum Journal***, three findings emerged that the research team felt should be brought directly to the attention of OSPA members.

First, the study could not ignore the twin factors of poverty and mobility. Oklahoma does not yet have a reliable system for tracking mobility; however, the present study supports the position that poverty and mobility are entwined. Neither factor is well understood by decision-makers at the local, state, or federal levels. What is clear, however; is that poverty is a weighty factor in the high challenge elementary school and school psychologists are needed to help teachers and administrators understand the culture of children living in poverty.

State-wide, 14,000 of 50,000 babies are born into families below the poverty line; (\$ 18,400 annual income for a family of four) and the per cent is creeping up, (19 to 22 percent since 2000); and seven per cent (62,000) live in homes where no adult works. Data compiled by schools across the state are not encouraging. Of the seventy-seven Oklahoma counties, twenty-six include at least one elementary school with 100% free and reduced lunches for their students. Of the 994 elementary attendance sites in the state, only 259 report less than 50% free and reduced lunches, i.e., 74% of the elementary schools in Oklahoma serve free and reduced lunches to between half and all of their students. Educators are valiantly coping, but more and more time is being consumed during the school day by circumstances related to poverty.

The second factor that left researchers trembling was the lack of informed intervention efforts aimed at struggling students. Interventions for struggling students, for the most part, can best be described as “throwing curriculum at a child already drowning in curriculum.” High-challenge elementary schools need school psychologists to work collaborative with regular classroom teachers to better understand the nature of a struggling student’s struggle so intervention can be targeted. Administrators would serve their school well to re-examine how their school psychological services staff is being utilized.

The third factor involves special education, which can perhaps be best described as “the black hole in educational space.” Students with documented disabilities deserve to have teachers (both regular and special education) who understand the nature of their disabling condition. Students are not to be taught by category. IEP’s are created for a reason. Researchers found cause for great concern in both special education and regular education inclusion settings.

Across the nation, school psychologists are being asked to become involved in children’s lives in positive ways. For school psychologists serving in high-challenge elementary schools in Oklahoma, the need for positive involvement includes representing the needs of children of poverty, children who are

struggling in the academic setting, and children with documented disabilities. Administrators who see school psychologists solely as gatekeepers to special education are challenged to re-examine their view.

OSPA Soliciting Nominees for Outstanding School Psychologist

The Awards and Honors Committee is soliciting nominations for the Fay Catlett Award for Outstanding School Psychologist. Our purpose is to recognize outstanding Oklahoma School Psychology practitioners for their advancement of School Psychology and to increase public awareness of the profession.

Nominees for the award must provide exemplary services to children and youth. Practicing school psychologists who spend the majority of their time providing direct services to students, teachers and parents in school settings are eligible.

We believe that there are many School Psychologists who are providing excellent services who may go unrecognized for years. This is an opportunity to nominate an associate or someone with whom you are professionally acquainted. We hope that we will have numerous nominations prior to the January 1 deadline. The award will be presented at the Spring Conference in April 2006.

Nominations may be made by colleagues, supervisors or through self-application. We encourage nominations from all regions of the state. The recipient will be selected from the applications by a panel of OSPA Executive Board Members. The recipient will serve as the nominee for the NASP School Psychologist of the Year and asked to submit this application in September, 2006.

If you would like to nominate a school psychologist for the Fay Catlett Award, please contact Kitty Beaman by phone (405) 533-3888 or email willpsych@cowboy.net . You can also link to the nomination form from the OSPA website. That form can be emailed or faxed to Kitty at (405) 533-2888. Nominators will be contacted and asked to provide a brief statement about the nominee.

My New Best Friend *Linda Nickell*

One day we were told that if we wanted to maintain our employment,
we'd do "laptop deployment".
We didn't dare fuss, it meant a computer for each of us.
It'll be your new best friend they raved; special education is saved!
Just a flick of the cursor, a mere press of the key; from endless hours of
drudgery, we'd all be delivered!

But that's not how it went; we'd all been had; it was a nefarious ruse!
They were so sleekly designed, so deceptively simple, so alluringly easy.
We thought we'd be in charge, but those balky "little mules" had their own set of
rules!
They froze, they lost connection, they threw us into fits of conniption!

What to do, what to do, with those stubborn little mules.
Then it hit me, why not master those laptop rules.
It was a miracle, my relationship with the computer was on the mend.
It was after all my new best friend!

Note: This tongue and cheek rambling was composed by Linda Nickell after her district (Oklahoma City Schools) began using laptop computers to handle every aspect of the special education process. Linda is part of the generation that did not encounter computers until late in her career. Hence, her experience in adjusting to the laptops was less than ideal.

PAUL WARDEN AND MARY JO KEATLEY GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS

The OSPA Graduate Studies Award was established in 1998 to recognize and provide financial support to students in school psychology training programs in the state of Oklahoma. These awards were developed in response to our professional commitment to encourage promising students to complete a school psychology program. Awards are presented to those individuals interested in pursuing a degree or certification in School Psychology.

Each candidate must submit a completed application, a resume, a copy of current transcripts, a professional statement, and one letter of recommendation. A committee from the OSPA board will review all completed applications using the specified criteria. Completed applications, resumes, transcripts, and letters of reference must be received no later than February 1, 2004 for consideration of the 05-06 awards. Candidates must be OSPA members. Those who complete the application process will receive a one-year student membership in OSPA for the following year. Monetary awards will be presented annually in the amount of \$1000 to the two selected students.

Applications are available from program directors at the University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and East Central University.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

LOOKING AHEAD TO NASP CONVENTIONS

March 28 - April 1, 2006	Hilton Anaheim and Anaheim Marriott Hotels
March 27 - 31, 2007	Hilton New York
February 5 - 9, 2008	New Orleans Marriott
February 24 - 28, 2009	Boston Marriott Copley Place
March 2 - 6, 2010	Hyatt Regency Chicago

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