



October 18, 2011

Honorable Members of the General Assembly &  
Public Committee Members of the Legislative Task Force to Study School Discipline  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203-1776

Dear Honorable Members of the General Assembly and Public Committee Members of the  
Legislative Task Force to Study School Discipline:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed legislative draft. We have a few suggestions and additions to recommend to the committee and wanted to provide them in writing with more information as to why the changes would be beneficial.

Many of our suggestions involve adding the term "school psychologist" to the proposed draft in order to ensure school psychologists continue to be able to help students and their parents in these difficult situations.

School psychologists have the unique training that combines behavioral science with social and emotional development underpinnings. In addition, they are proficient in data collection, analysis, and statistics that allow them to bring a scientific and systematized approach to education, learning and behavior. When issues arise, especially of a severe or chronic nature, school psychologists are invariably involved in generating collaborative solutions based on theories of motivation, counseling, and behavior modification.

Because of their focus on behavioral and emotional impacts on learning and life skills, school psychologists are key members of school-based teams that address bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

**Suggested Amendments to Legislative Task Force to Study School Discipline**  
**Bill Draft 10-3-11**

- Page 5, line 16 – could add "social and emotional learning curricula" along with counseling. This is a nationally recognized term that targets identified areas of social and emotional need. Nationally approved programs are research-based and show direct impact on behaviors, social skills, and emotional development.
- Page 15, line 1 could add "Such a plan shall be developed through collaborative effort with school psychologists, social workers, counselors, or other similarly qualified school professionals."

- Page 17, line 15 should include "school psychologists" after "social workers." School psychologists are almost invariably involved in helping to form discipline policy and positive school culture.
- Page 18, line 14 could add "and social, emotional and cognitive development" after "...individual conduct." Consequences should be tailored to individual developmental needs.
- Page 18, line 22 - add, "...that promote social and emotional learning" after "...other approaches to address student misconduct..."
- Page 27, line 20 - should include both "school psychologists" and "school social workers" in part to be consistent with page 17, line 15, but also for relevance of practice.
- Page 34, line 22 - add "along with appropriate professional supports by school psychologists, social workers, and/ or special education professionals." School psychologists have training that is specific to understanding and remediating behavioral, social, and emotional gaps, including collecting and analyzing relevant data around behavioral motivation in behavior plans. They also have specific training in counseling practices that support students in developing more adaptive behaviors, as well as familiarity with research-based curricula and programs.
- Page 36, add "A statewide association of school psychologists" in the list under subsection (2). School psychologists would bring both a developmental and behavioral science perspective to such training, especially with regard to current research around best practices.
- Page 42, line 2, - Would ask the Task Force to discuss and consider adding: "including educational service minutes identified in an EIP" after "instruction." School personnel have often run into the issue of holding a "manifestation determination" meeting when students have been given an in-school suspension (e.g., is the behavior that has resulted in suspension a *manifestation* of the disability). It might be prudent to make sure that a blanket requirement provides for these minutes to be met while a student is in-school suspended (especially minutes that address social-emotional/ behavioral needs).

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our recommendations further, please contact Jessica Morgan at 303-881-6820 or Grant Van Pelt at 303-704-7419.

Thank you for all of your hard work on this important issue, and we look forward to continuing to be a part of this process!

Sincerely,

Colorado Society of School Psychologists