

# **Psychologist Evaluation Instrument**

**Performance Standards, Performance Criteria,  
and Descriptive Examples**

## Introduction

The school psychologist standards developed for the MCPS Professional Growth System serve several necessary but distinct purposes for MCPS school psychologists. The standards provide a point of reference from which to measure implementation of the practice of school psychology, as defined by MCPS. They also ensure that legal mandates (IDEA) and state (COMAR) regulations are being observed, and that adherence to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) *Code of Conduct* and *Blueprint for Training and Practice II* is occurring.

Each MCPS standard of performance is linked with one or more of the NASP *Blueprint for Training and Practice Blueprint* domains and aligned with legal requirements. The standards are functionally defined by several criteria and by descriptive examples of what a school psychologist might be doing.

Since MCPS school psychologists are assigned to different units within MCPS, each serving a specific role and function, the work of the individual psychologist in meeting the criteria will be determined in part by the expectations of the individual assignment. The practice of school psychology, while largely defined by assignment, involves characteristics of the following distinct services that are embedded in the standards.

**Assessment**—Assessment is the formal gathering of information that enables the school psychologist to integrate, interpret, and report about child behavior and learning. Methods to gather this information vary and are based in large part on the reason the student has been referred to the psychologist and the student’s age and developmental level. School psychologists are experts in assessing learning, attention, perception, and memory as expected in normal child development; intellectual and cognitive growth or weakness; social, emotional, and motivational factors that have an impact on achievement; the measurement of positive behavioral growth or behavioral transgressions; and the distinction between positive peer/adult relationships and those that are indicative of social maladjustment. School psychologists use norm-referenced measures, observation techniques, clinical judgment and inquiry, and functional behavioral assessment to ascertain factual information that provide school teams, students, parents, and the community with techniques and methods that improve learning, resolve discipline problems, and help students adjust to academic demands.

**Consultation & Intervention**—School psychologists provide direct and indirect consultation and interventions to students, staff, and families. When school psychologists personally implement treatment programs they are conducting direct consultation and intervention. Direct consultation activities include individual psychological counseling (individual, group, crisis intervention), the implementation of functional behavioral assessment and behavior improvement plans, specific skill training (study skills, aggression replacement, progressive relaxation) parent training and prevention programs (social skill development or the development of schoolwide positive behavioral supports). Indirect interventions include instructional, mental health and behavioral consultation, formal observation and behavior counting, design of programs to replace

ineffective behavior or improve academic skills, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. Indirect consultations regularly occur during team meetings or staffings, child study activities, special education IEP development and/or committee assignments.

**Program design, research and evaluation**—School psychologists are frequent members of EMT/CAP, IEP, or school improvement teams serving to provide information about psychology and learning theory as it relates to positive student outcomes and system reform. In this role, the school psychologist’s function is to help schools assess student or program strengths and needs, map assets, and design and implement systems that monitor and evaluate program effectiveness. School psychologists rely on data-based decision making and encourage staff to seek solutions to problems based on factual information.

**Standard I: School psychologists are committed to students and their learning.**

NASP Blueprint Domains:

- Effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills
- Data-based decision making and accountability
- School culture, organization, and climate
- Interpersonal communication, collaboration, and accountability

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist participates in formal and informal school-based problem-solving meetings in an effort to identify the factors that positively influence student achievement.
- B. The school psychologist engages in indirect and direct consultation and assessment practices that identify why students are not being academically or socially successful.
- C. The school psychologist uses data-driven processes that provide meaningful information to teachers about how students learn.
- D. The school psychologist helps develop strategic instructional, behavioral, or motivational interventions that strengthen the learning process.
- E. The school psychologist participates in the review, monitoring, and evaluation of classroom interventions.

***Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity***

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
regularly attends and participates in formal and informal school-based meetings	fails to attend and participate in school-based meetings

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
utilizes appropriate indirect and direct consultation and assessment procedures to evaluate school concerns	fails to utilize appropriate assessment processes to evaluate school concerns and identify factors that influence learning
establishes and maintains productive partnerships with families and staff	rarely establishes and maintains productive partnerships with families and staff
generates, models, and helps implement strategic instructional and behavioral interventions	rarely generates and models strategic instructional and behavioral interventions
regularly collaborates with school-based staff regarding monitoring and evaluation of classroom instructional and behavioral interventions	infrequently collaborates with school-based staff regarding monitoring and evaluation of classroom instructional and behavioral interventions
regularly collaborates with community and public agencies and private partners regarding the needs of students and families	rarely collaborates with community and public agencies, and private partners regarding the needs of students and families

**Standard II: School psychologists have knowledge of educational and psychological theories that are research- and practitioner-based and know how to deliver these services to schools.**

NASP Blueprint Domains

- Interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation
- Effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills
- Socialization and development of life competencies
- Home/school/community collaboration
- Research and program evaluation

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist keeps abreast of sound psychological principles and practices in consultation, assessment, and counseling.
- B. The school psychologist acts as a resource for colleagues, parents, and students in the application of psychology to effective schooling.
- C. The school psychologist contributes to the ongoing review of educational practices.
- D. The school psychologist selects appropriate materials, methods, and resources to assist students in achieving learning and behavioral objectives.

**Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity**

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
regularly attends trainings and conferences and completes course work relevant to the discipline of school psychology	infrequent attendance at trainings and conferences. does not complete course work relevant to the discipline of school psychology
demonstrates flexibility in making decisions about interventions based on a sound integration of theory, practice, and information about the student	inflexible in service delivery. models a “one-size-fits-all approach
actively volunteers and participates in work groups and on committees that contribute to the review of educational practices	rarely volunteers or participates on committees or work groups
conducts in-service training for school stakeholders.	rarely conducts in-service training

**Standard III: School psychologists use a decision-making process in collaboration with other team members, school staff, students’ family members, and other stakeholders, as appropriate to identify academic and behavior problems, collect and analyze information to understand the problems, make decisions about service delivery, and evaluate the outcomes of service delivery.**

NASP Blueprint Domains

- Data-based decision making and accountability
- Interpersonal communication, collaboration, and consultation
- Home/school/community collaboration

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist defines problems in ways that identify desired goals (e.g., academic/social/emotional/behavioral/vocational), are measurable, and are functionally linked to assessment strategies.
- B. The school psychologist uses multiple methods and/or techniques to assess student progress toward behavioral, academic, and vocational goals and assist in revising instructional strategies, as necessary.
- C. The school psychologist selects assessment methods that are validated for the problem area under consideration, including formal and informal assessment procedures, as appropriate, and include data collected from all settings and persons necessary and appropriate to complete the problem-solving process.
- D. The school psychologist helps develop and implement effective interventions that are based upon the data collected and related directly to the outcomes of those interventions.
- E. The school psychologist establishes and maintains productive partnerships with families and staff by promoting and modeling openness and mutual respect.
- F. The school psychologist integrates technology and research into planning and facilitating effective instructional and behavioral interventions.

***Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity***

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
clearly states problems in observable and measurable terms	rarely states problems in observable or measurable terms
assessment strategies reflect and address the identified problem	rarely uses assessment strategies that address the identified problem
uses valid and appropriate assessment methods that match the presenting problem	rarely uses valid and appropriate assessment methods that match the presenting problem
collects data for problem solving from sources and settings pertinent to the identified problem	rarely collects data for problem solving from sources and settings pertinent to the identified problem

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
develops effective interventions that are based on the data collected	rarely develops effective interventions that are based on the data collected
uses appropriate monitoring and evaluation techniques when assessing student progress	rarely uses appropriate monitoring and evaluation techniques when assessing student progress
regularly collaborates with community and public agencies, and private partners regarding the needs of students and families	rarely collaborates with community and public agencies, and private partners regarding the needs of students and families
establishes and maintains productive partnerships with families and staff	rarely establishes and maintains productive partnerships with families and staff
uses technology and/or research in planning and facilitating instructional and behavioral interventions	rarely uses technology and/or research in planning and facilitating instructional and behavioral interventions

**Standard IV: School psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop challenging but achievable cognitive, social/emotional, and academic goals for all students and provide information about ways in which students can achieve these goals.**

NASP Blueprint Domains

- Effective instruction and development of cognitive/academic skills
- Program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation
- Student diversity in development and learning
- Prevention, wellness promotion, and crisis intervention

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist applies current empirically based theories learning to the development of effective instructional strategies that promote student achievement and positive behavioral, social, and emotional development.
- B. The school psychologist incorporates assessment information into the development of instructional strategies to meet the individual learning and social/emotional needs of children.
- C. The school psychologist is knowledgeable about advances in curriculum, instruction, and mental health and shares this knowledge with educators, parents, and the community at large to promote improvement in instruction, student achievement, and healthy lifestyles.
- D. The school psychologist provides information in both informal and formal settings to school staff on how students develop and learn.
- E. The school psychologist provides training and workshop activities to students, parents, and staff based on the practical and effective use of learning theories.

**Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity**

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
applies empirically based theories of learning to develop effective instructional strategies	rarely applies empirically based theories of learning to develop effective instructional strategies
incorporates student-specific assessment information into the development of instructional strategies	rarely incorporates student-specific assessment information into the development of instructional strategies
shares or demonstrates knowledge about advances in curriculum, instruction, or mental health	rarely shares or demonstrates knowledge about advances in curriculum, instruction, or mental health
communicates practical information to teachers and parents on student learning	does not communicate practical information to teachers and parents about student development and learning
provides in-service activities to students, parents and staff	rarely provides in-service activities to students, parents and staff

**Standard V: School psychologists actively participate in activities designed to continue, enhance, and upgrade their professional training and skills to help ensure high-quality service provision.**

NASP Blueprint Domains

- Legal, ethical practice and professional development
- Research and program evaluation

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist seeks out opportunities to enhance instructional practice through workshops, professional organizations, conferences, and graduate-level courses.
- B. The school psychologist seeks the assistance of other disciplines in consultative or referral roles in providing services, as appropriate.
- C. The school psychologist actively participates in school- or systemwide committees or system initiatives such as crisis management teams, peer review teams, or system reform.
- D. The school psychologist mentors, coaches, and supervises the development of school psychology interns.
- E. The school psychologist maintains awareness of effective psychological practices and materials and uses newly acquired knowledge and skills in professional practice.

**Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity**

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
attends workshops, seminars, in-service trainings, conferences, and the like related to the profession of school psychology	rarely attends workshops, seminars, in-service trainings, conferences, and the like related to the profession of school psychology
actively participates in the local, state, or national school psychologists association.	does not participate in the local, state, or national school psychologists association
collaborates with other professionals in the field	shows little or not evidence of collaboration with other professionals in the field
participates actively in MCPS school-or systemwide committees or work groups	participates infrequently in MCPS school- or systemwide committees or work groups
assumes responsibility for assisting in the development of interns/practicum students and/or the mentoring of psychologists new to MCPS	does not participate in assisting in the development of interns/practicum students and/or the mentoring of psychologists new to MCPS
stays abreast of current practices by reading journals pertinent to the field of school psychology and applies innovative evidence-based strategies and practices based on the reading	does not read about or apply new techniques or practices

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
participates in teaching graduate-level courses, makes workshop presentations, or submits articles for publication about issues relevant to the field of school psychology	does not participate in teaching graduate-level courses, make workshop presentations, or submit articles for publication about issues relevant to the field of school psychology

**Standard VI: School psychologists exhibit a high degree of professionalism.**

NASP Blueprint Domains

- Legal, ethical practice, and professional development
- Research and program evaluation

*Performance Criteria*

- A. The school psychologist takes the leadership role on committees; helps to plan staff meetings or workshops, and shares knowledge or expertise with colleagues.
- B. The school psychologist meets professional obligations in a timely manner (including all reports and data collection), participates in meetings, has infrequent absences, and is willing to serve as a facilitator/mentor to others.
- C. The school psychologist conducts him-/herself in a professional manner when collaborating with colleagues, community and public agencies, and private partners on behalf students and families.
- D. The school psychologist follows federal, state, and local policies and procedures and adheres to the National Association of School Psychologists Code of Conduct.

***Examples of evidence of beliefs, commitment, and tenacity***

*The school psychologist...*

<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Below standard</b>
assumes leadership roles on committees, helps to plan staff meetings, and shares knowledge or expertise with colleagues	rarely assumes leadership roles on committees, helps to plan staff meetings, or share knowledge or expertise with colleagues
completes professional obligations in a timely manner including regular attendance and participation in meetings	rarely completes professional obligations in a timely manner, including regular attendance and participation in meetings
completes all reports in a timely manner, using professional language only when necessary and appropriate, and monitors written material to be sure it is error free (specifically with regard to punctuation, grammar, and usage)	fails to complete reports in a timely manner. frequently uses professional jargon. fails to monitor written material to be sure it is error free (specifically with regard to punctuation, grammar, and usage)
conducts self in a professional manner	fails to conduct self in a professional manner
follows federal, state, and local regulations, policies, and procedures	fails to follow federal, state, and local regulations, policies, and procedures
adheres to the National Association of School Psychologists code of conduct	fails to adhere to the National Association Of School Psychologists code of conduct

# **Evaluation Process for Psychologist**

## **Formal Evaluation Schedule**

### **Tenured, Experienced, or Veteran MCPS School Psychologists**

School psychologists who are tenured professionals follow the same professional growth cycle as their teacher colleagues. They will be evaluated formally at the end of a three-, four-, or five-year growth cycle depending on years of service in MCPS. If a supervisor has concerns about the performance of a tenured school psychologist, who is not currently in a formal evaluation year, s/he may request that the Office of Human Resources place the school psychologist on a special evaluation. A special evaluation removes the school psychologist from the professional growth year.

### **New School Psychologists/Tenured MCPS Educators**

MCPS educators who accept promotions or lateral moves to school psychologist positions are in a unique category. Although they are veteran MCPS educators, they are new to the school psychologist profession and must build their repertoire of school psychologist skills, knowledge, and strategies. They will be formally evaluated in their first year of service as a school psychologist, regardless of their standing in the professional growth cycle. They will not be required to complete a Professional Development Plan. Once they have demonstrated, through a formal evaluation, that they have met the Professional Standards for school psychologists, they will continue in the professional growth cycle already set in motion in their previous MCPS position.

**Example:** If a teacher with six years of service becomes a school psychologist at the start of her seventh year with MCPS, she will be formally evaluated during that first year as a school psychologist. Assuming that the evaluation demonstrated that professional standards had been met, the school psychologist would continue in her professional growth cycle the next year (year 8) and be formally evaluated next in year 9. The exception to this would be the case in which their second year as a school psychologist would be an evaluation year in the regular cycle. In that case, an exemption would be made so that there are not two consecutive years of evaluation (pending approval of the request for exemption).

### **New School Psychologists/Permanent Status MCPS Supporting Services Employees (Probationary)**

MCPS supporting services employees who accept promotions or lateral moves to school psychologist positions will be scheduled for formal evaluations during their first and second year in the school psychologist position. Once they have received satisfactory evaluations in the first two years as a school psychologist, they will follow the same professional growth cycle as their tenured school psychologist colleagues.

### **Experienced school psychologists/New to MCPS (Probationary)**

Experienced school psychologists who are new to MCPS are considered probationary and will be scheduled for formal evaluations during their first and second years of service with MCPS. They will not be required to complete Professional Development Plans during their first two years of service. Once they have achieved tenure, these school psychologists will follow the same professional growth cycle as their tenured school psychologist colleagues.

### **New School Psychologists/New to MCPS (Probationary)**

New school psychologists who are new to MCPS will be scheduled for formal evaluations in their first and second years of service. They will not be required to complete Professional Development Plans during their first two years of service. Their focus must be to develop a repertoire of school psychologist knowledge, skills, and strategies. Once probationary school psychologists have achieved tenure, they will follow the same professional growth cycle as their tenured school psychologist colleagues.

## **Supervision and Evaluation of School Psychologists— Suggested Practices**

Due to the variance among school psychologist assignments (some work in the field offices and provide direct support to specific schools, others work in special education programs or services, while others work in the Bilingual Assessment Team or Head Start), formative and summative conferencing, formal observation, and analysis of work products (psychological reports, behavior or instructional improvement plans) form the foundation for the evaluation process.

Formative and summative conferences serve to—

- set the stage for the observations;
- gain agreement of expectations and outcomes;
- set ground rules for positive growth and improvement;
- align what is being observed with the standard that it represents;
- allow for collaborative work: co-counseling, collaborative assessment, collaborative consultation;
- determine the observation method (direct, one way mirror, audio- or videotape); and
- gain agreement on evaluation criteria, recording of meetings, and maintenance of records of the meetings.

Observed activities may occur during—

- team activities such as grade-level, IEP, or EMT/CAP team;
- development of functional assessment and behavior improvement plans;
- instructional or behavioral consultation activities;

- parent feedback conferences;
- psychological assessment (when approved by the child’s parent and observed by a certified school psychologist only);
- counseling or skill-building activities (when approved by the child’s parent and observed by a certified school psychologist only);
- group presentation or workshops;
- 504 activities;
- manifestation or causation meetings;
- due process or hearings;
- psychologist in-service or staff meetings;
- staff development activities; and
- peer coaching, mentoring, or review activities.

Analysis of work products includes, among others—

- reading, editing, and evaluating formal psychological evaluations, including formal review of the tests and measures used;
- reviewing counseling or other direct consultation case notes;
- reviewing functional assessment and behavior improvement plans;
- review of case logs or assignment logs;
- review of peer observation or mentoring activities; and
- review of other collaborative activities.

## **Definition of Formal Observation**

- During the formal evaluation year for school psychologists (probationary and tenured), at least three observations per calendar year must occur for a minimum of 30 minutes each. Due to the many activities that the school psychologist is engaged in, it is suggested that different activities be observed in different settings. The supervisor of psychological must conduct at least one of these observations for probationary school psychologists.
- The supervisor of psychological services may be consulted and asked to conduct observations of tenured school psychologists by the program manager or supervisor.
- Several activities of a school psychologist may require confidentiality. Permission to observe these confidential activities must be obtained in writing with the student’s parents during a pre-observation conference.
- Summative conferences should be held within three schools days after the observation. Summative observation conferences not held within that time frame can be extended after mutual agreement.
- School psychologists may respond to observation report summaries by submitting a written response to their file.
- The written observation reports and final evaluations are to be reviewed and signed by the program manager or supervisor and by the supervisor of psychological services.

*Observations for the purpose of evaluation of school psychologists may be conducted by:*

- MCPS supervisor of psychological services
- Special education program managers or field office supervisors
- Directors of student services or special education
- Field office specialist under the direction of field office supervisors

## **Additional Data Sources**

In addition to observations, other data sources must be included during a formal evaluation of school psychologists. School psychologists are encouraged to assemble a portfolio of documents and artifacts that demonstrate that the Professional Standards for school psychologists have been met.

Additional factual information may include—

- school psychologist logs;
- evidence of work on professional development plans;
- school schedules;
- caseload records;
- functional assessments and behavior improvement plans;
- counseling notes;
- behavioral charts;
- informational publications generated by the school psychologists such as newsletters, PowerPoint presentations, and brochures;
- articles submitted or accepted for publication;
- surveys or other evidence of feedback from administrators, teachers, parents, and/or students;
- student work samples that resulted from direct instructional or behavioral consultation;
- meeting agendas, presentations, workshops, or staff development activities;
- written communication with administrators, parents, students, and/or staff;
- letters sent to psychologists by administrators, parents, students, and/or staff;
- evidence of continuing professional development by way of college, Internet, or university course completion; and
- evidence of local, state, or national attendance and follow-up reflection about integrating that which was learned into practice.