

2017

Professional development for the West Virginia School Psychologists Association

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS ASSOCIATION**

A thesis submitted to
The Graduate College of
Marshall University
In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of
Education Specialist
In
School Psychology

by

Andrea Nunn

Approved by:

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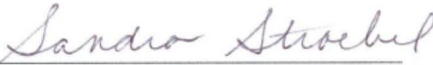
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APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Andrea Nunn, Ed.S., affirm that the thesis, *Professional Development for the West Virginia School Psychologists Association*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the School Psychology Program and the College of Education. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.


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ABSTRACT

The present study evaluated the professional development provided by the West Virginia School Psychologists Association (WVSPA) in 2016. A 2011 survey was revised and distributed to all members of the WVSPA. West Virginia school psychologists rated the overall WVSPA's professional development for the last few years as 'good'. Participants rated WVSPA services as 'good' or 'excellent' with the exception of the resources available through the WVSPA website. Most participants rated this area as 'fair', showing that it would be a major recommendation for WVSPA revision. In addition, topics suggested as needing more coverage in future conferences include: emotional behavioral disorder, other low incidence disabilities, consultation, prevention, and behavioral interventions. It should be noted that two obstacles to attending the WVSPA conferences are the timing of the Spring conference and the costs associated with the conferences. Although they were seen as the biggest obstacles, the percentages of participants that viewed these as obstacles were still very low. Another area examined by the study was how often school districts fund professional development related costs. Most districts always pay for the spring and fall conferences, regional meetings, and travel/lodging to conferences and meetings. Courses and fees associated with national certification and NASP conferences are not paid for by most districts. Finally, the study also showed that most participants preferred face-to-face formats for professional development.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional development is advanced learning intended to help maintain, continue, and improve competency in one's career (Thomas, 2010). Employers as well as licensing agencies often require completion of a specific number of professional development hours per year to develop new skills and maintain those that have already been acquired. Those who do not participate in continuing their professional development are often at a disadvantage when it comes to improving their practices. Professional development is an ongoing process which continues throughout one's career due to the continuously changing content and standards (O'Leary, 2017). This current study examines the professional development provided by the West Virginia School Psychologists Association (WVSPA).

Professional development is a way to learn new skills and keep up with credentialing in several different ways, both formally (workshops, seminars, classes, etc.) and informally (coaching, self-study, community involvement, etc.). As a professional, it should be important to oneself to not only attend job mandated continued professional development, but also to voluntarily participate in new learning opportunities and experiences. Professional development is a great opportunity for colleagues to come together and share different challenges, solve problems, and ask questions peer-to-peer. Challenges are constantly developing, so it is vital that professional development formats are able to transform and grow along with one's needs (O'Leary, 2017). It is important that professionals engage in professional development that is effective, regardless of the format.

Effective Professional Development

When looking at effective and successful professional development, Guskey (2003) poses the question, “Do we know what makes professional development effective?” (p. 748). There could be several answers to this question depending on one’s training needs, professional goals, personal philosophes, etc. Although there is some variability, research has documented some general ways to ensure effective professional development. Ultimately, professional development is effective if the practitioner is better or improved. (Mizell, 2010).

O’Leary (2017) states that regardless of role, there are five overall standards that can be followed to allow for a personalized effective professional development experience for areas of need. Standard one states that the professional development should address the unique circumstances as well as provide opportunities for one to actively learn. Standard two states that time is essential, meaning that time should be allowed to modify the learning to fit the environment. Standard three stresses that the professional development should not be passive so that there are multiple opportunities to engage in and use what is being taught. Standard four suggests that professional development should be modeled and concrete examples should be given. In the final standard, the content has to be specific. When there is collaborative and consistent instruction, there is an increase in the amount of success and involvement of best practices (O’Leary, 2017).

Looking more specifically at effective professional development in education, it has to be coherent, meaning that it has to align with specific school, state, and national goals as well as the needs of the employee (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Effective professional development has to meet the needs of the educators and professionals in schools and they then must put those skills and knowledge they have learned to work. The Association for Supervision

and Curriculum Development (ASCD) stated that some of the key elements to effective professional development should be a long-term commitment, differentiation, and goals tied to the district (Zimmerman & May, 2003). When learners can see a connection between a learning opportunity and their daily duties, the professional development becomes more relevant (Flores, 2005; Tate, 2009). Additionally, when different professional development experiences can be related to one another while also relating to standards of the school and state, learners can see the bigger picture and view their learning experiences as more valuable (Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009). By viewing experiences as more valuable, the ability to change the way they practice in order to create a more positive outcome is more likely to occur (Porter, Garet, Desimone, & Birman, 2003).

In addition, when an employer can help their employees to see this bigger picture by helping provide learning opportunities that align with school and state standards, they are showing them support. Support from the employer is important. If one does not have support, both internally and externally, then one cannot apply learning from the professional development programs to the workplace (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). By allowing collaboration, input, and active engagement in deciding the professional development that will be received, the employer also shows support for staff.

It is important for those engaging in professional development to have input regarding what it is they will be learning and how it will be learned (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Therefore, when collaborative action plans are implemented, the likelihood that one will accept obligation for continued professional development increases (Lester, 2003). The employees are then more likely to be engaged in the learning experiences because they had an input on what

professional development would be provided. A study shows that active engagement during professional development results in 90% of the experience being remembered (Tate, 2009).

When we think about how students learn, we want them to be logical, curious, and critical inquirers. It has been suggested that those same traits need to be present in someone partaking in professional development (Abilock, Harada, & Fontichiaro, 2013). Encouraging this inquisitiveness increases motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a prerequisite that is vital for all learners (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). As a whole, adult learners are intrinsically motivated by having the opportunity to identify and address problems and concerns and come up with solutions to those problems, especially when they can directly relate to them (Hunzicker, 2010; Knowles, 1983). When motivated to learn, they are able to ensure that they increased their capacity to learn in professional development sessions. After this motivation has been established, engagement in learning opportunities should be job-embedded, collaborative, ongoing, and instructionally focused (Hunzicker, 2010).

Studies also show that one of the most important components when it comes to improving knowledge and practice is content focus that includes ongoing exposure (Kennedy, 1998; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). With a focus on content, optimal learning designs include the following recommendations: (a) information should be provided on the new skill, as well as, bringing awareness to it, (b) the new skill should be modeled in a classroom or school by an expert, (c) opportunities for practice should be established, (d) reflection upon the skill and how application can be improved should be done collaboratively (Joyce & Showers, 2002). When learning designs like this are incorporated into trainings, ongoing exposure to and application of content are required, which make it a very intensive training (Joyce, et al., 2002). It has been indicated by literature that an educator's skills are

likely to increase if a professional development model combines trainings that are straight forward, intensive (repeated exposure), and comprised of job-embedded coaching and practice. (Brown, Stroh, Fouts, & Baker, 2005)

Job-embedded practice is important because it occurs directly in the work settings. Procedures and skills would normally be implemented in the work place, so it makes sense that this is where they should be practiced. Coaching could be used to help practice these new skills. Coaching is used to describe strategies for improved performance in an area (Brown, et al., 2005). When there are educators who have an expertise in specific content that is being taught, coaching can be incorporated into practices that are job-embedded. Not only should these coaching educators have an expertise in the specific content, but they should also have expertise in professional development practice, interpersonal, and communication skills. Coaching affords a way to examine and look back on practices in a safe environment where it is ok to try, fail, revise, and try again (Raney & Robbins, 1989).

There are three different models of coaching which include: supervisory, side-by-side, and multi-level coaching. Supervisory coaching is when the coach observes the implementation of a new concept or strategy, records data, and provides feedback (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Side-by-side coaching is when the coach observes implementation, intervenes to model, and then turns implementation back over (Kretlow& Bartholomew, 2010). Multi-level coaching combines the two previous forms of coaching where professional development takes place and then follow-up supervisory coaching occurs, and side-by-side coaching occurs for those who may need it (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). The learner has to decide which of these models of coaching is best for them, and which one they respond best to. Benefits to modeling the skills include: skill application can be facilitated, there are more opportunities for practice, and

reflection on skill development can occur between the learner and the coach (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Another critical element of effective professional development depends on these coaches providing constructive feedback after the learners have applied skills they learned during job-embedded practice (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, & Powers, 2015).

Last but not least, feedback from learners is a way to gauge perceived effectiveness of professional development. In every field, challenges are constantly developing, so it's vital that providers of professional development make sure delivery formats are able to transform and grow along with one's needs (O'Leary, 2017) and a way to do this is by getting feedback from those partaking in the professional development. These providers should want to know how their professional development was received. When providers of professional development want to know how to modify, change, or evaluate the design of how their professional development is delivered, they need learners to reflect on their skill development (Haslam, 2008). While perceived improvement in knowledge and abilities can provide important information that can be used to efficiently participate in constructive evaluation of professional development, there is still the possibility that educators' perceived and demonstrated skills vary (Castillo, Curtis, Chappel, Cunningham, & Armistead, 2016). Since the learners have different needs and skills, the ratings may vary. Regardless of the variance in feedback, when the composite feedback is compiled it is still helpful in improving content. This is a great way for providers to use feedback from delivery of professional development to make the next delivery more effective.

Delivery of Professional Development

Professional development can be delivered in an array of formats. However, researchers of professional development have indicated that there is not one method of delivery that is better than another (Desimone, 2009). A study by Quick et al (2009) found that the format of

professional development delivery did not matter and even the traditional formats (workshops and in-service) had a positive effect on practice. Also, there is not a recommended number of hours that are required for effectiveness in a particular format; however, it has been found that for professional development to have an impact it should be both sustained and intensive instead of shorter professional development sessions (Garet, et al., 2001). With that being said, an increase in educators' knowledge and skills are linked to considerable exposure to effective professional development (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). This exposure must be comprehensive, evidence based, and occur regularly (Standards for Professional Learning, 2015). In a study by Hammer (2013), the most successful professional development that had positive effects was comprised of a minimum of 30 contact hours.

Regardless of the format used, higher levels of learning and positive professional development experiences have been found to occur with small groups of learning communities (Lester, 2003). When any format of delivery is paired with demonstrations, practice, and coaching, the learner's skills and knowledge will increase (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Some popular ways of providing continued small group professional development include individuals reading, studying, and conducting research on their own then sharing the information with the group. Study groups with peers that are focused on a main topic of need or shared interest is another mode of professional development.

Teachers observing other teachers, expert coaching colleagues, and supervision are other great ways to partake in continuing professional development with colleagues. The supervisor is one who supervises the job of someone else (Olivia & Pawlas, 1998). In schools, supervision is used to help develop educational practices (Farhat, 2016). These supervisors could consist of superintendents, department heads, specialists, principals, etc. (Farhat, 2016). An effective

supervisor will encourage improvement (Olivia & Pawlas, 1998) as well as provide opportunities for one to develop skills (Barnet, 2004). Other practitioners may prefer to be mentored by someone more experienced or meet with school faculty to discuss problems and improve performance.

Online training and college courses also provide another format to receive professional development. Although online professional development hasn't been shown to be more effective than any other format, there has been an overall positive response to its general effectiveness from instructors and participants alike (Thomas, 2010). Research also shows that this form of professional development is cost-effective (Thomas, 2010). For an online professional development program to be successful, the entity offering it should take into consideration the factors that led participants to want to utilize that format (Thomas, 2010). One study shows that participants are likely to choose the online format because it offers an anytime and anyplace atmosphere and eliminated the need for travel, therefore these benefits should be considered when deciding whether to implement online formats of professional development (Thomas, 2010).

Other professional development formats include workshops, conferences, improvement programs, private vendor programs and webinars just to name a few. There are many other ways to gain experience and continue professional development (Mizell, 2010). Most times, professional development is delivered in the form of a workshop or a one-day in-service; however, this has been shown to produce little improvement in performance (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Yoon, et al., 2007) because there is no chance to run-through these newly learned skills and therefore no feedback can be given (Boardman, Arguelles, & Vaughn, 2005). The more engaged the learner is beyond video participation alone, the more of

an impact the professional development will have (Shaha & Ellsworth, 2013). Research has shown that the more actively participants partake in professional development (regardless of format) beyond conventional passive learning, there will be more of an impact from participation (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Desimone, et al., 2002; Garet, et al., 2001; King, 2002; Santagata, 2009).

Importantly, an effective follow-up strategy to any format of professional development is written reflection (NSDC Standards: Learning, 2009). For this to be effective, the reflection should be written shortly after the professional development opportunity and then reviewed later (Tate, 2009). Research has found that learners value opportunities where they feel they can learn from and with each other (Lieberman, et al., 2008). It was also found that learning is strengthened when there is an opportunity to willingly share with colleagues and accept their feedback (Lambert, Wallach, & Ramsey, 2007; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Since there is not a recommended delivery format of professional development, the learner must decide what their preferred format is. The preferred format for one professional to gain new skills may not be the same for someone else striving to earn those same skills.

Professional Development Obstacles

Professionals face several obstacles that can hinder their ability to participate in continuing professional development programs. It is suggested that these obstacles could include: (a) the amount of time required for the coursework, as well as, time that would have to be spent away from work; (b) the quality of the program that is being offered; (c) expenses that are associated with travel and program fees, as well as, the loss of income due to not working; (d) family responsibilities; (e) unwillingness to change one's disposition and being uncertain; (f)

and issues with motivation and/or attitude (Castillo, Curtis, Chappel, Cunningham & Armistead, 2013).

The actual process of professional development can be an inhibiting factor (Zimmerman & May, 2003). Some practitioners may not have enough time to engage in coursework that requires extensive study (Zimmerman & May, 2003). Time spent away from work could result in a loss of income (Zimmerman & May, 2003). There are times when practitioners find themselves going to conferences to gain professional development and their school districts will not provide them with paid leave to obtain training. Usually there are fees that are associated with continuing professional development. Some of these expenses could include gas, hotel stays, food, transportation, and the cost of the program itself. The practitioners could be expected to pay these costs themselves with no help from their district. A survey of 237 school principals found that the most dominant hindering factor to professional development was the lack of time and money (Zimmerman & May, 2003). Another factor that sometimes keeps practitioners from gaining professional development is time they would have to spend away from their families. They may not be in a situation where they can leave their family for an extended period of time. There are many situations where the cost of leaving their families would outweigh the desire to even go. Also if a professional feels that the quality of a program being offered is not very high, it is possible that they will not want to spend their time or money on something they feel would be of no benefit to them. This attitude and resistance towards particular topics can be seen as obstacles (Zimmerman & May, 2003). There are also practitioners out there who are unmotivated to gain experience on particular topics. They may see them as unimportant or as a waste of their time. Their outlook towards learning new things could hinder them from wanting to attend (Castillo, et al., 2013).

Professional Development in School Psychology

Just like other professionals, school psychologists are also expected to maintain and acquire skills to advance their knowledge and understanding of practices within their field. Formal education provides the foundation for which school psychologists are able to practice. However, they must continue to improve their skills and acquire new ones through the use of continued professional development. Every school psychologist is different and in return they have different areas in which they are more interested or have areas in which they need to enhance their skills (Guskey, 1994). It is important for school psychologists to reassess their skill sets often when planning opportunities for professional development (Castillo, et al., 2013). Since school psychologists differ, they each have their own ideas and opinions on what they want when partaking in professional development. In addition to having different ideas and opinions, not all school psychologists function on the same level. Some have more training than others and some have highly skilled areas that others may not have. A checklist for self-reflection was developed to identify strengths and needs related to different practice areas (Brown, 2014). The downfall to using this checklist to determine where strengths and weaknesses lie is that several different skills can be interrelated (Brown, 2014).

Each school psychologist experience level is different. The newer school psychologists have skills that are more relevant in certain areas because they are being taught the newest strategies (Armistead, 2008). An older school psychologist would need continuing professional development to learn these newer skills. However, older school psychologists will have skills from their experiences. Not only do school psychologists have specialty areas of interest, their interests can change throughout their careers. They may gain interest in other areas, become mentors, have interest in becoming supervisors, or an array of other options. Any of these

decisions would require them to utilize professional development to gain success in the area or areas to which they are transitioning.

Likewise, school psychology encompasses many different areas and requires varied skills. As a professional, a school psychologist has many roles including cooperation and collaboration with colleges and advocacy. They also provide assessments for cognitive and emotional development, achievement, intelligence, and social learning. Providing direct mental health services is another role of school psychologists. School psychologists also have to function as program evaluators, mental health practitioners, and consultants just to name a few. School psychologists can benefit from professional development in interventions, social and emotional development, and many more (Wnek, Klein, & Bracken, 2008).

Since school psychology encompasses so many different areas, when looking at continuing professional development for school psychologists, one must also consider the setting in which they practice, as well as their ever changing and expanding roles. Schools may have different expectations which may necessitate training in specialized areas. For example, some school psychologists can now make diagnoses using the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V). It would be important for them to be competent in the use of this manual. Depending on the setting, the plan used for continuing professional development has to consider the different roles of that psychologist, as well as functions, expectations of their employer, interests, specialty areas, and individual career plans and personal desires (Armistead, 2008). More and more often, school psychologists are on the front line and have to know what is within their realm of knowledge, and when they should refer to someone else who is more competent in a specific area. This means they would also have to make sure they are competent

enough in specific areas to adequately provide services in an array of formats, yet again promoting the need for professional development.

As mentioned before, studies show that one of the most important components when it comes to improving knowledge and practice is the focus on content (Desimone, et al., 2002). Regardless of the role that the school psychologist is fulfilling, the content of the professional development must aim to improve that specific knowledge as well as practice. It is also important to work collaboratively so that new ideas can be addressed, different problems with implementation can be discussed, and the determination if different practices are making a difference (Garet, et al., 2001; Loucks-Horsley, 2010; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). It is also important to be a part of a learning community that includes not only colleagues from the general school psychology community, but colleagues who share the same specialty or current role as well so that there can be a unique tailored focus to learning (Lekp & Brownell, 2009).

Another factor that some school psychologists may have to think about when continuing their professional development is the advancement of technology. There are more and more technological advancements being made in the field of school psychology every year. Tests are coming out on iPads, online scoring is available, and online report writing are other examples of ways that technology is advancing the field. If practitioners did not learn how to use these methods in graduate studies, it would be important for them to take some type of professional development to gain experience and knowledge on how to use the more up to date technological advances. It is also important for school psychologists to be able to use technology in general. A client may have a question that requires searching the internet for information to adequately answer. This would entail being able to find information that is accurate and valid. If a

practitioner does not know how to search online libraries they could potentially miss out on key information that would be important or misinform the client. It is also important for the school psychologist to be knowledgeable on how technology is used in the classroom so that suggestions could be made for different classroom interventions. With the possibility of computer based ability tests being used more and more in the future, it is important for the practitioner to be able to know how they work and how they are accessed. With these assessments becoming available, there could be more of a trend towards this type of test administration (Macklem, Kalinsky, & Corcoran, 2001).

Not only practitioners, but also professors of school psychology are expected to stay abreast of developments in the field to better prepare their students for the ever-evolving profession. Four activity areas were found to contribute to professional development when academic psychologists were surveyed (Hettich & Lema-Stern, 1989). These activities included: involvement in staff development and training programs, consulting or clinical work within the college, research outside of graduate specialty area, and other areas of committee work (Hettich & Lema-Stern, 1989).

A final factor to be considered are the guidelines provided by the professional association. School psychologists receive guidance for professional development from the National Association of School Psychologists Practice Model.

NASP Practice Model

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) provides a practice model that encompasses ten domains outlining different types of services and practices to meet the needs of children, families and communities as best as possible. The tenth domain in the NASP practice

model states that practices should be legal, ethical, and professional. This domain suggests that school psychologists must maintain effective practices and provide services that are consistent with professional standards. NASP states that an important professional practice is engaging in life-long learning and participation in professional development (National Association of School Psychologists, 2016).

Importantly, as stated by the tenth domain in the NASP practice model, continuing professional development is not just a professional obligation but it is also an ethical one. School psychologists are encouraged to make professional development a personal responsibility. It is also recommended by NASP that graduate programs inform candidates about the need to participate in professional development when entering the profession to continue to develop their skills, as well as, skills for career-long self-evaluation. It is also important for school psychologists to make sure they are aware of current trends and constantly reassess their skill sets when they are continuing their professional development (Castillo, et al., 2013). Another reason that school psychologists are so strongly encouraged to engage in professional development is to avoid professional obsolescence (Armistead, 2008). Using the half-life concept, Dubin suggested that in 10-12 years psychologists will have lost approximately half of their competence and that school psychologists could be even more prone to this concept because most of them practice in isolation without adequate supervision (Dubin, 1972).

In addition, according to the National Association of School Psychologists' *Principles for Professional Ethics*, Principle II discusses different aspects of professional competence and responsibility. Under this principle, it states that school psychologists show responsible caring. Responsible caring is making sure what you do and how you practice benefits others. Principle II.1 is competence. For a school psychologist to be proficient, one must benefit children,

families and communities by only participating and engaging in practices that they are competent and qualified for. Standard II.1.4 states that school psychologists must involve themselves in professional development and remain current with their trainings and practices. Sometimes there can be a gap between research and practice. There are two reasons this gap can occur. When there is a lack of information and knowledge of application, and the doubt that practices are related to improved outcomes. As a school psychologist, one should also know that professional development and professional supervision are required to have skills that are beyond that of a beginning practitioner (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010a).

Also, according to NASP's *Standards for the Credentialing of School Psychologists*, it is recommended that each state require a minimum of seventy-five hours of continued professional development every three years to renew school psychology credentials in that state (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010b). According to the West Virginia Board of Education (Policy 2419), school psychologists are required to complete eighteen hours of continuing professional development annually. Of those eighteen hours, twelve have to reference professional growth (State Board Policies, 2014). If a school district only has one or two school psychologists, they cannot rely solely on the professional development that is provided by the schools because they are geared more toward teachers. Therefore, it would be important to find professional development that meets their needs as school psychologists.

Need for Professional Development

After a practitioner determines what their personal needs for professional development are, those needs have to be addressed. According to the NASP, the practice standards recommend that professional development needs be organized by importance. These standards

suggest that the most important need would be the client, followed by the needs of the school district (Porter, et al., 2003; Senge, et al., 2000).

After both of those needs have been met, then it would be appropriate for the practitioner's interest areas to be addressed (National Association of School Psychologists, 2000). School psychology practitioners also have to consider that laws affecting how they practice are constantly changing. These changes in part are due to the ever-changing society. With new laws emerging and other ones changing, it is vital that school psychologists are up to date (NASP, 2000). With the use of continuing professional development, school psychologists are able to maintain their knowledge of new and updated laws so that they are aware of changes. These changes could possibly affect how they practice, write reports, and even deliver services.

Professional Development for School Psychologists in West Virginia

WVSPA provides school psychologists in West Virginia with professional development. A survey was created by the Marshall University School Psychology program in conjunction with the WVSPA in 2011 to examine the professional development, demographics, and practices of school psychologists in West Virginia. According to 80.9% of school psychologists, the most important role for the WVSPA was provision of professional development to school psychologists to improve services to children and youth. This was followed by maintaining competitive salaries (73.1%), the right to practice legislative issues (71.4%), obtaining the same benefits as teachers (71.4%), defining the roles of WV school psychologists (69.8%), providing mentoring and support for new and less experienced school psychology practitioners (69.8%), recruitment and retention of school psychologists in WV (57.1%), legislative activism (50.7%), and the development of a work group for those seeking national certification (27.0%) (Jennings, Sheltraw, & Wilson, 2012).

Need for Current Study

While the 2011 study examined the role of the WVSPA, no studies have specifically examined the professional development preferences of school psychologists in West Virginia. The 2011 survey needed to be re-administered to determine current trends. It also needed revised to better examine the professional development provided by WVSPA. The current study is an analysis of the results of the professional development portion of the survey. The research questions are as follows:

1. In terms of improving practice as school psychologists, what is the overall assessment of the professional development provided by the WVSPA in the past few years?
2. What is the overall assessment of specific services provided by the WVSPA?
3. Which content areas are worthy of additional focus by the association during the next few years?
4. What are the top factors that present as obstacles to attending WVPSA conferences?
5. How often do school districts fund professional development related costs?
6. What is the preferred format for professional development?

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Participants

Participants were practicing school psychologists in the state of West Virginia. According to the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS), 131 psychologists were employed for the 2016 fiscal year. Recruitment for participants occurred through membership with the WVSPA, both at the 2016 Spring WVSPA conference and online via SurveyMonkey. A total of 65 (50%) West Virginia School Psychologists responded to the survey from the West Virginia School Psychologists Association and SurveyMonkey. Of these participants, 8 were male (12%), 55 were female (85%), and 2 (3%) chose not to disclose their gender. The ages of the participants ranged from 25-67 years. School psychologists from all 8 Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) participated in the survey.

Instrument

The 2011 survey was revised by the Marshall University School Psychology Program, in conjunction with the WVSPA, to re-examine the professional development, demographics, and practices of the West Virginia School Psychologists. Revision of the survey was also done so that it would more closely resemble the NASP survey. With regard to the current study, the revision added additional questions regarding professional development to better examine the trainings and services provided by the WVSPA. The survey was available in both a paper form and electronic form (via SurveyMonkey). The survey entitled West Virginia School Psychologists Five Year Consensus Survey, can be found in Appendix A.

Procedure

The 2016 WVSPA Spring Conference was held in Charleston, West Virginia on April 27th and 28th, at which time the West Virginia School Psychologists Five Year Consensus Survey was distributed. The conference attendees received a paper form of this survey. Participation was anonymous and voluntary. There was a drop box for the surveys to be returned in at any time throughout the conference. Even if an attendee chose not to participate, they could also return a blank survey. If participants returned a survey (blank or completed), their name was placed into a separate box and a drawing was held for door prizes. Door prizes consisted of four gift-cards valued at \$25 or \$75. In an effort to increase the number of participants, the WVSPA membership server was used to send follow-up emails to West Virginia school psychologists. Additionally, Marshall University graduate students extended participation invitations via phone calls to West Virginia school psychologists. A link to the electronic form (via Survey Monkey) was given to these participants. This electronic form of the survey was also anonymous and voluntary. The current study resulted in a total of 66 surveys collected. Of those surveys, 9 were online versions and 57 were paper versions. Each of the research questions were answered by examining the results of the participants as a whole group. The research questions were also analyzed in terms of their RESA and years in practice. There are 8 different RESAs (See Table 6). There was one participant who marked two different RESAs, therefore the participant was discarded. The number of years in practice was divided and coded into four different groups (See Table 7).

Data Analysis

Data was saved on Microsoft Office Excel and was then transferred to Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) for statistical analyses. Frequencies were ran to determine whole group percentages on survey questions. Not only were whole group percentages ran but the participants were also categorized by their RESA and years in practice. A Cramer's V calculated cross tabulations to determine significances with regard to years in practice adjusted standardized residuals were used to find significances within RESAs.

Institutional Review Board

The Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the current study. The study was granted 12 months to conduct. The letter from the IRB is in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The current study is an analysis of the results of the professional development portion of the WVSPA survey.

Research Question 1: In terms of improving practice as school psychologists, what is the overall assessment of the professional development provided by the WVSPA in the past few years?

Participants rated the overall professional development (not just professional development provided at the spring and fall conferences) that WVSPA has provided in the past few years as either ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, or ‘poor’. As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants (55.4%) stated that it was ‘good’. ‘Excellent’ was chosen by 32.3% of participants, 9.2% rated it as ‘fair’, no one rated it as ‘poor’, and 3.1% of participants did not answer the question.

When examining this question in terms of RESAs, there were no significant differences between the RESA groups; however, the majority of RESA 1 (80%) rated the overall assessment of professional development provided by WVSPA as ‘good’. The majority of RESA 2 (50%) chose not to rate the overall assessment. Of the remaining participants in RESA 2, the assessment was rated as ‘fair’ (25%) and ‘good’ (25%). RESA 3 had a majority of its participants rate the overall assessment as ‘good’ (63.6%). In RESA 4, 100% of the participants rated the overall assessment as ‘excellent’. In RESA 5, a majority (62.5%) of participants chose a rating of ‘good’. The remaining RESAs all had a majority of participants choose ‘good’ as the overall rating. Percentages for RESAs 6, 7, and 8 were 80%, 53.8%, and 60.0% respectively.

The majority of the RESAs chose to rate the overall assessment of professional development as ‘good’ which aligns with the assessment of professional development when not broken down by RESA.

The overall assessment of professional development was examined in terms of the participant’s years of practice. When doing so, there was no significance between assessment of professional development and years of practice of participants.

Research Question 2: What is the overall assessment of specific services provided by the WVSPA?

Table 2 depicts participants’ perception of services provided by the WVSPA fall and spring conferences in terms of percentages. When looking at Table 2, the majority of participants rated provision of professional development at conferences as ‘excellent’ (53.8%). ‘Good’ was the overall rating of provision of professional development at WVSPA sponsored regional meetings with 43.1% of participants choosing this rating. The majority of participants (38.5%) chose a rating of ‘good’ for legislative activism for school psychologists across the state. In the area of policy leadership, the overall rating was ‘good’ at 41.5%. Provision of mentoring for early career school psychologists had a majority rating of ‘good’ (52.3%). The final area evaluated was the resources available through the WVSPA website. The majority, (46.2%), of participants chose ‘fair’.

These areas were then examined with regard to RESAs. When looking at the provision of professional development at conferences, RESA 7 had more participants than expected rate the assessment of professional development at conferences as ‘fair’ while the overall assessment before examining by RESAs was ‘excellent’.

Examination of provision of professional development at regional meetings showed that RESA 2 had the majority of participants rate the assessment as 'fair'. This was significant because overall, the majority of participants rated the assessment of professional development at regional meetings as 'good'. RESA 4 had 100% of participants rate the assessment as 'good'. This is noteworthy because before examining by RESAs, the majority of participants rated this as 'good' but that majority was only made up of 43.1% of participants.

When looking at the assessment of legislative activism, RESA 4 had 33.3% of participants rate the assessment of service as 'poor'. This was much more than expected because overall, only 6.2% of participants rated the area as 'poor'. The overall assessment before examining by RESAs was 'good'.

Policy leadership for school psychologists across the state was rated as 'good' before examining by RESAs. RESA 6 had 80% of participants rate the area as 'excellent', which was more than expected. RESA 5 had 50% of participants rate the assessment as 'fair', which was also more than expected.

Provision of mentoring for early career school psychologists was assessed by 100% of RESA 2 as being 'good'. RESA 6 had no participants rate the area as 'good', which was lower than expected.

Examination of the assessment of resources available through the WVSPA website showed that RESA 6 had 40% of participants rate the area as 'excellent' which was higher than expected. RESA 6 also had no participants rate the area as 'fair'. This was lower than expected. RESA 7 had 53% of participants rate the area as 'good' (more than expected) and RESA 8 had 40% of participants rate the area as 'poor' (more than expected).

When comparing overall assessment of specific services provided by WVSPA by years in practice, only two areas showed significance. These two areas were legislative activism and resources available through the WVSPA website. When legislative activism was compared by the number of years in practice, all groups rated this area as ‘good’ except for those who had 21+ years in practice. The majority of this group rated it as ‘fair’ (60%). Before participants were broken into groups based on years in practice, the overall assessment in this area was also ‘good’ (38.5%).

The overall rating of the assessment of resources available through the WVSPA website was ‘fair’ (46.2%). However, when evaluated by years of practice, one of the age groups did not choose ‘fair’ as their overall assessment. Participants with 11-20 years in practice chose ‘good’ as their overall assessment at 35.2%.

Research Question 3: Which content areas are worthy of additional focus by the association during the next few years?

For this question, the categories which received the highest percentage of ‘poor’ and ‘fair’ coverage areas were reported as needing additional focus by WVSPA (See Table 3). The area of emotional behavioral disorder has a combined total of 47.7%, for ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ coverage suggesting the need for additional training by the association in this content area. Other low incidence disabilities had 61.5% of participants rating the previous coverage as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. Consultation is another area that the majority of participants rated as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ (53.8%). Lastly, prevention and behavior intervention both had a total of 43.1% of participants rating the coverage as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’.

While school psychologists across the state reported overwhelmingly positive coverage of autism by the association (78.4% of participants rated coverage as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’), 50% of RESA 5 school psychologists rated the association’s coverage as ‘fair’.

When examining emotional behavior disorder, RESA 5 had 25% of school psychologists rate the area as ‘poor’. This was more than expected considering the overall assessment only had 7.7% of participants rate the coverage as ‘poor’.

Nearly 40% of all respondents rated coverage of specific learning disabilities as ‘excellent’, another 41.5% rated the coverage as ‘good’. Twelve percent of RESA 5 rated coverage as ‘excellent’ and 75% as ‘good;’ this was much more than expected.

Overall, participants rated the coverage of intellectual disabilities as overwhelmingly positive (63.1%). For RESA 3, school psychologists perceived the coverage in this area to be more adequate overall. The same held true for RESA 5.

Approximately 62% of participants rated WVSPA’s coverage on other low incidence disabilities as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. RESA 2 however, had a higher percentage of participants who reported significantly weaker coverage in the other low incidence area.

Of the other professional development categories, respondents indicated poorer coverage overall in consultation, prevention, and behavior interventions. Strikingly, RESA 7 indicated WVSPA coverage of consultation to be strong overall with 70% rating coverage as good. RESA 5 rated WVSPA coverage of behavioral interventions more negatively than expected with 37.5% of respondents rating it as poor.

Four content areas were significant when evaluated by years of practice where the majority of participants rated them as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’. The areas were mental health, prevention, policy, and academic interventions.

When evaluating mental health, before participants were divided into groups based on years of practice, mental health had ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ ratings by only 15.4% of participants. When comparing this to the participants’ years of practice, two groups (4-10 years in practice and 21+ years in practice), rated mental health as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ at 21.4% and 30% respectively.

The next content area that showed a significant difference when compared by years of practice was prevention. Before being grouped by years of practice, prevention was viewed by 43.1% of participants as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. When comparing this to years of practice, two groups viewed this content area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. Participants with 0-3 years in practice had 28.6% of participants showing ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ responses in prevention and 29.4% of participants with 11-20 years in practice rated the area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’, which was much lower than the 43.1% of participants before being grouped by years of practice.

Policy was the next area that showed a significant difference when compared by years of practice. Before being divided by years of practice, only 6.2% of participants viewed this area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. When we compared by years of practice, 3 groups had percentages higher than 6.2%. Participants with 0-3 years in practice showed 14.3% of participants view this area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. Participants with 4-10 years in practice showed 7.1% and participants with 21+ years in practice showed 10% of participants view this area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’, all of which were higher than the overall percentage of 6.2%

The last area that showed a significant difference when compared by years of practice was academic interventions. Before being divided by years of practice, 33.9% of participants viewed this content area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’. Once being divided by years of practice, participants with 0-3 years in practice and participants with 4-10 years in practice showed 42.9% and 39.3% (respectively) of participants view the area as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’, which was higher than the overall rating of 33.9%.

Research Question 4: What are the top factors that present as obstacles to attending WVPSA conferences?

The top factors that presented as obstacles to attending WVSPA conferences were timing of the spring conference (24.6% never/7.0% strong deterrent) and the costs associated with the conference (33.8% never/7.7% strong deterrent) (See Table 4). Factors that were not a deterrent were timing of the fall conference (53.8% never/0% strong deterrent), and the registration process (64.6% never/ 0% strong deterrent). Location (38.5% never/3.1% strong deterrent), and time away from work (18.5% never/6.2% strong deterrent) were moderate obstacles to conference attendance.

When examining factors that present as obstacles to attending WVSPA conferences by RESAs, all school psychologists in RESA 2 rated the timing of the spring conference as not being a deterrent to attending. This was the opposite of the overall finding that the timing of the spring conference was a deterrent to attending conferences.

The costs associated with attending conferences was overall the biggest deterrent for participants. Eighty percent of school psychologists in RESA 6 responded that costs were never a deterrent, while RESA 3 had more participants than expected rate costs as a strong deterrent.

Overall, the registration process was never a strong deterrent for participants attending conferences; however, RESA 3 had 18.2% of participants rate this area as being a strong deterrent. RESA 1 had 40% of school psychologists rate the registration process as moderate, which was more than expected.

When comparing years of practice to the overall extent to which factors present as obstacles to attending WVSPA conferences, there were no significant findings between age groups.

Research Question 5: How often do school districts fund professional development related costs?

Table 5 shows that according to the response of the participants, 70.8% of participants stated that their district always pays for fall and spring conference registration fees. Participants report that 43.1% of school districts always cover the costs of regional meetings. It was reported by 49.2% of participants that their district always cover the costs of travel and lodging to conferences and meetings. However, when it comes to NASP conferences, only 7.7% of participants report that their district always cover the cost, whereas 56.9% of participants state that their district never covers that cost. Courses and fees associated with national certification are never covered by districts according to 72.3% of participants and always covered by districts as reported by 3.1% of participants.

Research Question 6: What is the preferred format for professional development?

Participants had the option to choose face-to-face, online, or blended formats of professional development. Out of the 65 participants, 41 chose face-to-face, 1 chose online, and 23 chose blended formats. Thus, 63.1% of participants prefer professional development to be

face-to-face. Online professional development was only preferred by 1.5% of participants, and 35.4% of participants preferred to have blended formats of professional development.

RESA 3 had 9.1% of participants that chose online as their preferred format for learning professional development. This was more than expected because overall, only 1.5% of participants chose online as their preferred format.

When comparing the overall preferred format for learning professional development by years of practice, there were no significant differences between age groups.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

West Virginia school psychologists rated the overall assessment of professional development (not just professional development provided at the spring and fall conferences) provided by the WVSPA as ‘good’. All of the eight RESAs, with the exception of RESA 4, rated the overall WVSPA professional development as ‘good’ as well. RESA 4 rated the overall professional development as excellent. There was no significance difference between age groups when rating the overall satisfaction with professional development. This shows that WVSPA members are satisfied with the overall professional development that is being provided.

Results from the study show the rating of the provision of professional development at WVSPA fall and spring conferences was ‘excellent’. RESA 7 had more participants than expected rate this area as ‘fair’. There were no significant differences by years of practice for this variable. This is consistent with the overall rating of professional development in question 1 and confirms the favorable opinion WVSPA members have of the provided professional development.

Provision of professional development at WVSPA sponsored regional meetings had an overall rating of ‘good’. The majority of school psychologists in RESA 2 rated this area as ‘fair’. This was significant because overall, the majority of participants rated the assessment of professional development at regional meetings as ‘good’. All of the school psychologists in RESA 4 rated the assessment of the area as ‘good’. Although overall the majority of participants rated this area as ‘good’, the majority was only 43.1%, therefore making RESA 4 significant for having many more than expected rate it as ‘good’. Since professional development varies by

region this may indicate that RESA 4 does a better job of providing regional professional development. RESA 2 may need to work on improving their regional professional development.

Overall legislative activism was rated by participants as ‘good.’ RESA 4 had 33.3% of participants rate the assessment in this area as ‘poor.’ This was significant because overall, only 6.2% of participants rated it as ‘poor;’ therefore RESA 4 had many more than expected rate it so low. It is unclear why RESA 4 rated it so differently. Perhaps their proximity to the Capitol made them think that it is easy to get involved with the legislature and WVSPA should be doing more. When it was compared by years in practice, participants with 21+ years in practice had an overall rating of ‘fair.’ This could be due to the fact that school psychologists in this group are at a time in their career where they can spend more time, money, and focus on legislative activism, therefore giving them a different perspective on overall rating. Or perhaps they can remember a time when school psychologists were more involved since they have a historical perspective.

Policy leadership as well as provision of mentoring for early career school psychologists both received an overall rating of ‘good’ from participants. RESA 6 had 80% of participants rate the area as ‘excellent’ which was more than expected. RESA 5 had 50% of participants rate the assessment as ‘fair,’ which was also more than expected. Overall, participants rated policy leadership as ‘good’ but when looking at how RESAs rated this area, less than half (3 out of 8) had a majority rating of ‘good’ for policy leadership. Provision of mentoring for early career school psychologists was assessed by 100% of RESA 2 as being ‘good.’ RESA 6 had no participants rate the area as ‘good,’ which was lower than expected. It is unclear why there are differences between RESAs for policy leadership and mentoring. Follow-up questioning was needed to determine the rationale behind the rating differences.

The final WVSPA service examined was WVSPA website resources. Participants gave an overall rating of 'fair.' Although the overall rating was 'fair,' RESA 6 had 40% of its school psychologists rate the area as 'excellent.' No one in RESA 6 rated the area as 'fair.' RESA 7 had the majority of their participants rate the area as 'good.' This was also higher than expected considering overall the rating was 'fair.' Forty percent of RESA 8 rated the area as 'poor.' The reason for differences by RESA cannot be determined by the current survey. When compared by years in practice, participants with 11-20 years in practice had an overall rating of 'good.' One possible explanation for this is that they make up an older demographic of school psychologists, therefore they are not as critical of web site design, set up, links to important pages and information, etc. as a younger generation would be when it comes to technology. Younger people may interact more with technology and have higher expectations based on viewing of other more advanced websites.

The next part of the study examined specific content areas and which of those areas needed additional coverage by the WVSPA. The areas that were rated by participants as needing additional coverage were: emotional behavior disorder, other low incidence disabilities, consultation, prevention, and behavioral interventions. Overall, when examining emotional behavior disorder, only 7.7% of participants rated the area as 'poor;' however, 25% of participants in RESA 5 rated coverage as 'poor'. The area of other low incidence disabilities was rated by approximately 62% of participants as either 'poor' or 'fair,' indicating the need for more coverage. RESA 2 reported significantly weaker coverage in other low incidence areas than the other RESAs. RESA 7 rated the coverage of consultation much higher than the overall rating. Overall, consultation was shown to have much 'poorer' coverage and RESA 7 had 70% of participants rating the coverage as 'good.' RESA 5 rated the coverage of behavior

interventions more negatively than expected. The information provided by RESAs is important because different RESAs may need different trainings due to area needs and the experience of the practitioners. This is consistent with the findings by (Armistead, 2008) which indicated that trainings must consider the needs of the practitioners. This information can be used by the RESAs to plan regional meetings.

When compared by years in practices, the areas that were rated as needing additional coverage were mental health, prevention, policy, and academic interventions. The only one that years in practice had in common with overall assessment was prevention. One explanation for this could be that different years in practice results in varied experiences. School psychologists could have had professional development in these areas through different resources and could then compare those resources to the professional development provided by the WVSPA. This again is consistent with the literature indicating that people need to consider their personal professional development needs when deciding on trainings (Porter, et al., 2003; Senge, et al.2000). When looking at the overall ratings of content areas by participants, it is interesting that they did not feel the need for additional coverage in the areas of mental health and autism. An explanation for this could be that the WVSPA has spent more funds when delivering professional development on these topics and have had presentations by experts in those fields. Another explanation could be that they are not as involved in delivering mental health services in their schools; therefore it is possible that they would not feel the need to have additional training in this area.

Obstacles to attending West Virginia School Psychology Association conferences was examined in the study. It was found that the strongest deterrents were the timing of the spring conference and the costs associated with the conferences. It is interesting that RESA 6 had 80%

of its school psychologists rate costs as never being a deterrent. When looking at the literature, there were no studies found indicating obstacles for school psychologists when it came to professional development; however, costs were a top deterrent to professional development when a group of principals were surveyed (Zimmerman, et al., 2003). Although these were the strongest deterrents, the percentages were still very low. This indicates that none of the listed issues were a deterrent for WVSPA members.

The participants rated the registration process and timing of the fall conference as factors that were never a deterrent. RESA 2 rated the timing of the spring conference as not being a deterrent to attending. This was the opposite of the overall finding that the timing of the spring conference was the second biggest deterrent to attending conferences. When looking at these obstacles compared by years in practices, no significant findings were noted.

The next area that the study examined was how often school districts funded professional development-related costs. The majority of participants reported that their district always pays for the fall and spring conference registration as well as regional meetings and travel/lodging costs for those conferences and meetings. The majority of participants also reported that their districts never pay for NASP conferences and courses/fees associated with national certification. The finding was beneficial for the WVSPA since it relies on membership to pay for the conferences. Members are more likely to attend when their districts pay for their professional development. Very small numbers attend the NASP conferences and this is likely due to the higher costs and the lack of reimbursement by districts.

Overall, participants reported that the preferred format for professional development was face-to-face. RESA 3 had 9.1% of participants choose online as the preferred format for learning professional development. This was much more than expected because overall, only 1.5% of

participants chose online as the preferred format. When comparing this by years in practice, no significant findings were reported. This also was a good finding for WVSPA which mainly provides face-to-face professional development. This indicates they are providing the professional development in the preferred format. This finding is different from Thomas (2010) who found participants more likely to choose the online format because of convenience and reduced expenses.

Limitations

There was one limitation to the online surveys. The online surveys omitted part of question number 4. The online version failed to ask the participant to rate the content area of academic interventions. Also on question number 4 there was a possible limitation to both forms of the surveys. The participants may not have understood that in addition to how they rated each content area they could also mark the box stating that they desired more professional development in that area.

Analysis was done by RESAs and not by regions. If regions were used instead of RESAs, a larger n would have been produced. When analyzing data by RESAs, a small n was produced; therefore, the Cramer's V could not be used to determine significance. There were too many variances that could have contributed to significances, such as participants not choosing a RESA, participants choosing a RESA but not answering particular survey questions, and some RESAs comprised of only a few participants where others were comprised of many just to name a few. Therefore, significances were determined within cells using the adjusted standardized residuals.

Recommendations for Future Studies

An in-depth look at preferred formats of professional learning was outside the scope of this study. This study only examined the preference between face-to-face, online, and blended professional development, but did not break them down any further (conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.). Future studies should examine this further. This study also only looked at the preferences of school psychologists in West Virginia. A comparison of School Psychologists preferences by states should be considered in future research. Future studies should also add a follow-up interview in RESAs that vary in order to better understand the differences. This would help guide professional development provided by the regions.

Appendix A

THE STATE ASSOCIATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following questions will address professional development in the field of school psychology.

1. Have you attended professional development for WVSPA in the past 5 years?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No **(if no, skip to Demographics and Background Information)**

2. In terms of improving your practice as a school psychologist, what is your overall assessment of the professional development provided by the WVSPA *in the past few years*?
 - a. Poor
 - b. Fair
 - c. Good
 - d. Excellent

3. *Over the past few years*, what is your overall assessment of the following services provided by the WVSPA?

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)	Don't Know (5)
Provision of professional development at conferences					
Provision of professional development at WVSPA sponsored regional meetings					
Legislative activism for school psychologists across the state <i>(Examples include pay parity, reduced ratios, Medicaid timelines)</i>					
Policy leadership for school psychologists across the state <i>(Examples include WVSPA position statements/comments to key state education policies)</i>					
Provision of mentoring for early career school psychologist					
Resources available through the WVSPA website					

4. Please rate the following content areas with respect to level of coverage provided during the WVSPA fall and spring conferences. Please also indicate which content areas are worthy of additional focus by the association *during the next few years*.

	Poor or insufficient coverage or attention	Fair coverage or attention	Good coverage or attention	Excellent coverage or attention	I desire more PD in this area	N/A
DISABILITY CATEGORIES						
Autism						
Emotional Behavioral Disorder						
Other Health Impairments (ADHD, etc.)						
Specific Learning Disabilities						
Intellectual Disabilities						
Other Low Incidence Disabilities						
OTHER CONTENT AREAS						
Consultation						
Mental Health						
Prevention						
Ethics						
Policy (e.g., WVBE 2419, IDEA, ADA, FERPA)						
Evidence-Based Interventions						
Academic Interventions						
Behavioral Interventions						

5. To what extent do the following factors present as obstacles to attending WVSPA conferences?

	Never a deterrent to conference attendance (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	A strong deterrent to conference attendance. (5)
Conference Locations					
Timing of Fall Conference					
Timing of Spring Conference					
Costs					
Registration Process					
Time Away from Work					

6. How often does your school district fund the following professional development related costs for you?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't Know
Fall WVSPA Conference Registration Fee					
Spring WVSPA Conference Registration Fee					
Regional Meetings					
NASP Conference					
Courses or Fees Association with National Certification					
Travel and Lodging to Conferences and Meetings					

7. What is your preferred format for professional learning?

- a. Face-to-Face
- b. Blended
- c. Online

8. What other changes can WVSPA implement over the next few years to better serve WV school psychologists and encourage greater association participation?

9. How familiar are you with the NASP Practice Model?
 - a. Not at all familiar
 - b. Somewhat familiar
 - c. Moderately familiar
 - d. Extremely familiar

DEMOGRAPHICS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender: Female _____ Male _____

2. Age _____

3. Ethnicity (Optional)
 - a. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - b. Black/African American
 - c. Native American/Alaskan
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Multiple Races
 - f. White

4. What languages do you speak fluently other than English? _____

5. If you speak another language, do you provide psychological services to students/families in that language? Yes _____ No _____ N/A _____

6. Disability (Optional): Yes _____ No _____ If yes, specify _____
7. Highest degree earned in school psychology
- None
 - Bachelors
 - Masters
 - Specialist
 - Doctorate
8. Highest degree earned NOT in school psychology (Specify field and degree type)

9. What is the name of the school psychology training program you attended? (List all)
- Marshall University
 - Other _____
10. Years of experience in school psychology _____
11. Annual salary (Primary position) _____
12. What is your length of contract?
- 200
 - 210
 - 220
 - Other _____
13. If you are a licensed school psychologist, please indicate the level of licensure
- Level I
 - Level II
 - I am currently working towards obtaining licensure
 - I am not a licensed school psychologist nor actively working towards licensure
14. Do you hold the NCSP credential? Yes _____ No _____
15. Membership (Check all that apply)
- WVSPA
 - NASP
 - APA
 - Other _____

16. Please list any careers you had prior to becoming a school psychologist

17. What is your current job title(s)? (Check all that apply)

- a. School psychologist
- b. University faculty
- c. Administrator
- d. State Department
- e. Retired
- f. Other _____

18. Type of setting (Check all that apply)

- a. Urban
- b. Suburban
- c. Rural

19. Please rank your time per week in each setting:

- a. _____ Preschool
- b. _____ Elementary
- c. _____ Middle/ Jr. High
- d. _____ High School
- e. _____ Other, specify _____

20. How many children do you serve? _____

21. What county do you work for? (Salaried and/or contracted) _____

22. How many other school psychologists (not including yourself) does your county employ?

23. Do you receive extra duty contracts to provide psychological services during the summer?

- a. Yes, every summer
- b. Yes, sometimes
- c. No, never
- d. School year contract already includes summer holidays

24. If applicable, please name any other extra duty contracts you receive (This applies to any type of extra duty contracts.)

25. What factors would cause you to leave your current job to move to a neighboring county or state?

- a. Higher pay
- b. Better work environment
- c. Family considerations
- d. More desirable location
- e. Variety of roles within the job
- f. Lower caseloads
- g. Reduced time spend writing reports beyond school hours
- h. Other _____

SCHOOL-BASED ROLES

26. Please specify how often you engage in the following activities:

	Almost every day	A couple times a week	About once a week	A couple times a month	I have provided these services before, but not within the past month	I provide these services but not on a regular basis	I have never provided these services
Assessment							
Report writing							
SAT and Problem Solving Team Meetings for Special Education Referrals							
Eligibility, IEP, and 504 Meetings							
Consultation							
Direct Academic Intervention							
Program Evaluation or Research							
Delivery of Professional Development (Training other educators or peers)							
Mental Health Services							

27. Please specify how often you engage in the following activities by ranking them in order (1 being the MOST frequent activity and 9 being the LEAST frequent activity)

- a. _____ Assessment
- b. _____ Report Writing
- c. _____ SAT and Problem Solving teams' meetings for special education referrals
- d. _____ Eligibility, IEP, and 504 Meetings
- e. _____ Consultation
- f. _____ Direct Academic Intervention
- g. _____ Program Evaluation or Research
- h. _____ Delivery of Professional Development (Training others or peers)
- i. _____ Mental Health

28. Based on personal interest, please specify how often you *would like to* engage in the following activities by ranking them in order (1 being the MOST frequent activity and 9 being the LEAST frequent activity)

- a. _____ Assessment
- b. _____ Report Writing
- c. _____ SAT and Problem Solving teams' meetings for special education referrals
- d. _____ Eligibility, IEP, and 504 Meetings
- e. _____ Consultation
- f. _____ Direct Academic Intervention
- g. _____ Program Evaluation or Research
- h. _____ Delivery of Professional Development (Training others or peers)
- i. _____ Mental Health

29. School-based mental health includes many different services. Please specify how often you provide the following mental health services:

	Almost every day	A couple times a week	About once a week	A couple times a month	I have provided these services before, but not within the past month	I provide these services but not on a regular basis	I have never provided these services
Primary Prevention Programming (e.g., PBIS, RTI, Bullying, Suicide, Drugs, Alcohol, Pregnancy, LGBT Issues)							
Crisis Support (Psychological first aid risk, suicide intervention, risk/threat assessment)							
SAT/ Problem Solving Involving Social Emotional Concerns (Not for Special Education Referrals)							
Individual Counseling (Includes social skill development and affective education as well as other forms of counseling)							
Group Counseling (Includes social skill development and affective education as well as other forms of counseling)							

Behavioral Programming (e.g. FBA, BIP)							
Collaboration with Other Mental Health Experts (e.g., referrals, sharing information)							
Parent Support (Assist families in secure resources, provide information to families)							

30. Please specify how often you engage in the following activities by ranking them in order (1 being the MOST frequent activity and 8 being the LEAST frequent activity)

- a. _____ Primary Prevention Programming
- b. _____ Crisis Support
- c. _____ SAT/ Problem Solving Teams Involving Social Emotional Concerns
- d. _____ Individual Counseling
- e. _____ Group Counseling
- f. _____ Behavioral Programming
- g. _____ Collaboration with Other Mental Health Experts
- h. _____ Parent Support

31. Based on personal interest, please specify how often you *would like to* engage in the following activities by ranking them in order (1 being the MOST frequent activity and 9 being the LEAST frequent activity)

- a. _____ Primary Prevention Programming
- b. _____ Crisis Support
- c. _____ SAT/ Problem Solving Teams Involving Social Emotional Concerns
- d. _____ Individual Counseling
- e. _____ Group Counseling
- f. _____ Behavioral Programming
- g. _____ Collaboration with Other Mental Health Experts
- h. _____ Parent Support

32. How well do you believe your assigned district and/or schools handle crises, in general?

- a. Not good at all
- b. Fair
- c. Very good
- d. Superb

33. Do you provide a leadership role in your district's crisis team?

Yes _____ No _____ Please explain

34. Please provide your role in the response to intervention as both intervention process and a process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities.

35. What services do you provide as a school psychologist in your district that no other school staff provides?

36. In what way has your role as a school psychologist changed in the last five years? (If you have less than five years experience, please skip this question)

37. Describe major advantages of being a school psychologist in your district. Include mention of any variables or job roles within your district that heighten job satisfaction.

38. Describe any major obstacles to being a school psychologist in your district?

39. Please provide any additional comments below.

Appendix B



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205
IRB2 #00003206

April 15, 2016

R. Lanai Jennings, PhD
School Psychology Department, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 857706-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Jennings:

Protocol Title: [857706-1] West Virginia School Psychologists Census Survey

Expiration Date: April 15, 2017

Site Location: MUGC

Submission Type: New Project APPROVED

Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire April 15, 2017. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for students Andrea Nunn, Ashley Stowers and Nicole Stinespring.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Table 1

Assessment of Overall Professional Development Provided by WVSPA

Overall Rating By Participants	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
No Response	2	3.1%
Excellent	21	32.3%
Fair	6	9.2%
Good	36	55.4%
Poor	0	0%
Total	65	100%

Table 2

Overall Assessment of Services Provided by WVSPA

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)	Don't Know (5)	No answer
Provision of professional development at conferences	0%	1.5%	44.6%	53.8%	0%	0%
Provision of professional development at WVSPA sponsored regional meetings	4.6%	23.1%	43.1%	12.3%	16.9%	0%
Legislative activism for school psychologists across the state	6.2%	24.6%	38.5%	29.2%	1.5%	0%
Policy leadership for school psychologists across the state	3.1%	18.5%	41.5%	27.7%	9.2%	0%
Provision of mentoring for early career school psychologist	6.2%	13.8%	52.3%	13.8%	13.8%	0%
Resources available through the WVSPA website	4.6%	46.2%	30.8%	10.8%	7.7%	0%

Table 3

Content Areas Rated with Respect to Level of Coverage Provided by WVSPA Conferences

	Poor or insufficient coverage or attention	Fair coverage or attention	Good coverage or attention	Excellent coverage or attention	No Answer (and NAs)	I desire more PD in this area
DISABILITY CATEGORIES						
Autism	1.5%	12.3%	44.6%	33.8%	7.7%	24.6%
Emotional Behavioral Disorder	7.7%	40.0%	38.5%	7.7%	6.2%	40.0%
Other Health Impairments	3.1%	23.1%	55.4%	10.8%	7.7%	10.8%
Specific Learning Disabilities	1.5%	12.3%	41.5%	38.5%	6.2%	24.6%
Intellectual Disabilities	6.2%	24.6%	44.6%	18.5%	6.2%	7.7%
Other Low Incidence Disabilities	16.9%	44.6%	20.0%	0%	18.4%	24.6%
OTHER CONTENT AREAS						
Consultation	9.2%	44.6%	32.3%	4.6%	9.3%	10.8%
Mental Health	0%	15.4%	49.2%	29.2%	6.1%	13.8%
Prevention	4.6%	38.5%	43.1%	6.2%	7.7%	13.8%
Ethics	0%	6.2%	43.1%	49.2%	1.5%	3.1%
Policy	0%	6.2%	50.8%	36.9%	6.1%	3.1%
Evidence-Based Interventions	6.2%	30.8%	40.0%	10.8%	12.3%	32.3%
Academic Interventions	7.7%	26.2%	35.4%	7.7%	23.0%	32.3%
Behavioral Interventions	6.2%	36.9%	38.5%	7.7%	10.8%	33.8%

Table 4

Extent to Which Factors Present as Obstacles to Attending WVSPA Conferences

	Never a deterrent to conference attendance				A strong deterrent to conference attendance.	No answer
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Conference Locations	38.5%	16.9%	26.2%	13.8%	3.1%	1.5%
Timing of Fall Conference	53.8%	21.5%	15.4%	7.7%	0%	1.5%
Timing of Spring Conference	24.6%	15.4%	24.6%	27.7%	7.0%	0%
Costs	33.8%	23.1%	24.6%	9.2%	7.7%	1.5%
Registration Process	64.6%	18.5%	12.3%	3.1%	0%	1.5%
Time Away from Work	18.5%	26.2%	32.3%	15.4%	6.2%	1.5%

Table 5

Funding of Professional Development Related Costs by School District

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't Know	No answer
Fall WVSPA Conference Registration Fee	5.4%	4.6%	9.2%	70.8%	0%	0%
Spring WVSPA Conference Registration Fee	12.3%	9.2%	7.7%	70.8%	0%	0%
Regional Meetings	26.2%	7.7%	7.7%	43.1%	13.8%	1.5%
NASP Conference	56.9%	18.5%	1.5%	7.7%	15.4%	0%
Courses or Fees Associated with National Certification	72.3%	10.8%	3.1%	3.1%	9.2%	1.5%
Travel and Lodging to Conferences and Meetings	18.5%	13.8%	8.5%	49.2%	0%	0%

Table 6

Participants Coded into RESAs

Specific RESA	Number of Participants in each RESA
No Answer	10
RESA 1	5
RESA 2	4
RESA 3	11
RESA 4	3
RESA 5	8
RESA 6	5
RESA 7	13
RESA 8	5
Total	64

Table 7

Years of Practice Coded into Groups

Number of Years of Practice	Group Number	Number of Participants in each Group
0-3 years	1	7
4-10 years	2	28
11-20 years	3	17
21+	4	10
No Answer	-	3

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