

Division 16 Response to MLA and FAQs

Below is the Division 16 response to MLA submitted during the June 2009 comment period. In addition to our formal submission (identified in blue) this document is annotated to help clarify our current thinking as it is related to the history of the MLA changes.

The Executive Committee of the Division of School Psychology of the APA recognizes the efforts of the Task Force to update the 1987 APA Model Licensure Act (MLA). We acknowledge the tremendous amount of work that has gone into this revision. We also appreciate the opportunities we have had to discuss the aspects of the document that are of particular salience to the Division and to school psychology.

(1) Although the Division Leadership did not have representation on the MLA TF that made the initial changes (e.g., removal of the school psychology exemption) our request to have official Division liaisons was recognized in Spring 2008. Since then Division liaisons have had the opportunity to represent the position of Division members and contextualize how proposed changes would impact the school psychology community.

As stated in previous feedback to the Task Force, the Division is particularly concerned with the removal of the exemption for school psychologists that was present in the 1987 MLA. The current draft, as it regards the school psychology piece, is not acceptable to the Division. We continue to recommend that the MLA retain an exemption for non-doctoral school psychology.

(2) The Division is steadfast in recommending retention of the school psychology exemption.

The following principles guide our current feedback and language for consideration.

1. Ensuring that all children in schools continue to have access to school psychological services.
2. Ensuring that the scope of practice of providers of school psychological services is not restricted
3. Ensuring that the providers of school psychological services in the schools have obtained the doctoral or specialist level of training in school psychology (thus recognizing that training at the masters degree level is not adequate) and be credentialed by their state education agency to provide school psychological services in the schools.

(3) Although it is unknown how changes to the MLA would impact state psychological association and state education agency policies regarding school

psychology practice we are unwilling to accept changes to the MLA that may compromise these principles.

As such, we recommend the following language:

Individuals who possess a doctoral or specialist level degree in school psychology from a regionally accredited institution and who are credentialed by their (relevant state education authority) to provide school psychological services in the public schools shall be permitted to use the specific title, “credentialed school psychologist,” or any title or description of their practice using the words “school psychology” or “school psychological” (e.g., specialist in school psychology or school psychological service provider). Such persons shall be restricted in their practice and in the use of the title to those settings under the purview of the state education agency.

(4) The Division recognizes that APA policy does not allow for masters level professional practice clinicians to use the title psychologist. However, we argue that specialist level training, regardless of the degree or credential that is conferred at various universities, is well beyond the typical 30hr masters degree and more inline with professional practice doctorates such as the Psy.D.