



# Getting Schooled in School Psychology

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## Do you have a “Jessie”?

Jessie is a great kid – wonderful sense of humor, popular, athletic, charming, and a generally positive student. A natural leader. But – he struggles with reading. He tries hard, but can’t seem to make words make any sense. You’ve tried all sorts of approaches, consulted with other teachers, worked with his parents, and still...nothing.

*...maybe a school psychologist can help...*



## OR maybe you have a “James” ...

James is essentially the reason you want to call in sick some days. He is aggressive with his peers – and on occasion, with teachers. He is loud and very disruptive, showing little, if any, interest in learning. He does enjoy Phys. Ed. His parents have been minimally responsive to your attempts to discuss some of James’ behaviors. You have consulted with your colleagues, who have been supportive, but secretly you feel that their general feeling is “Better you than me!”

*...maybe a school psychologist can help...*



## Overview

- Psychologists’ Association of Alberta
- Action on Inclusion
- Who are School Psychologists?
- Recent Roles of School Psychologists
- How can School Psychologists help?
- PAA’s Recommendations



## **Psychologists' Association of Alberta**

The mission of the Psychologists' Association of Alberta is to advance the science-based profession of psychology and to promote the well-being and potential of all Albertans.



## **Action on Inclusion (Aoi)**

- Collaboration
- Learning Teams
- Capacity Building
- Strength-Based Programming
- Continuum of supports and services from districts
- Wraparound Services from other Ministries
- System indicators to determine success
- New funding model (expected Sept 2012)



## School Psychology and Aoi

School Psychologists are science-practitioners who possess skills and knowledge in the areas of:

- child and adolescent development,
- principles of learning and behaviour and individual differences,
- social/emotional/behavioural and academic interventions,
- assessment
- program planning

*(CPA, 2007)*



## School Psychology and Aoi

“School psychologists are an integral and important part of the student services team, as well as of the school district’s organizational structure. School psychologists provide a wide variety of both educational and mental health services to districts, school staff, students, and their families.”

*(CPA, 2007)*



## Who are School Psychologists?

“School psychologists are licensed professionals with unique expertise in student learning and learning difficulties, child development, behaviour problems, school curriculum and school culture.”

*(CPA, 2007)*



## Needs in Schools

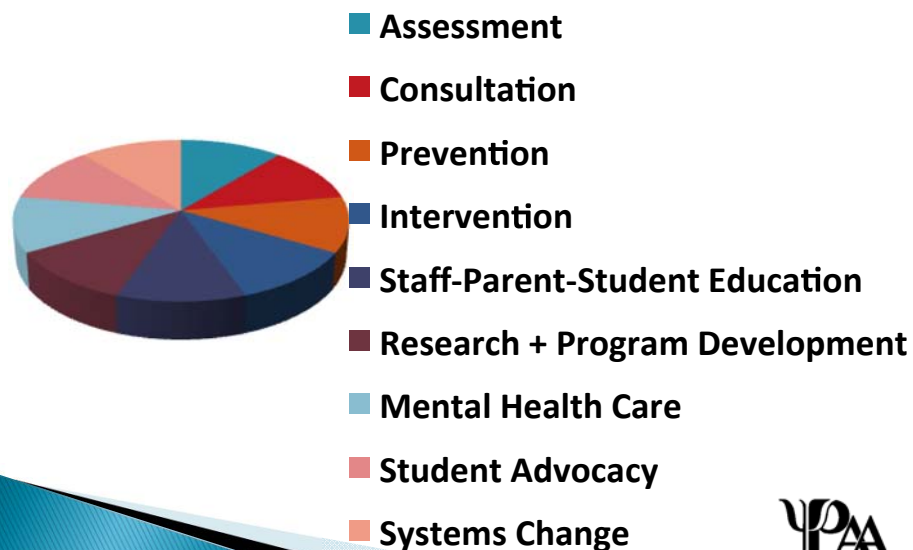
Timmons (2007) reported that few Canadian educators feel adequately prepared to teach children with special needs in terms of professional skills, special education support and expertise as well as necessary resources,

“...school psychologists are an excellent resource for schools, teachers and parents in providing in-service education on a variety of school-related problems and issues...”

*(CPA, 2002)*



## What does a School Psychologist do?



## The Case for Transformation

Alberta-based research has found:

- ▶ School Psychologists have traditionally been viewed as testers and gatekeepers
- ▶ School personnel value their consultative work as collaborators with the learning team

*(Ferstay-Bianchini, 1988; Janzen & Carter, 2001; Johnson, 2007; Mah & Crawford, 2004)*

- ▶ Contract psychologists are not always School Psychologists, and do not always possess skills beyond assessment

*(Janzen & Carter, 2001)*



## How can School Psychologists help with Aol?

School Psychologists can support the direction school districts are expected to set:

- ▶ Providing appropriate supports and services consistent with the principles of inclusive education:
  - collaborative working partnerships as part of the Learning Team
  - Liaison with community partners as one means of advocating for students and their needs
  - determine learning profiles and effective, strength-based interventions
  - PD for educators and parents – capacity building



## How can School Psychologists help with Aol?

- ▶ Accountability
  - Collecting and interpretation of data
  - Program effectiveness evaluation
- ▶ Funding and Support
  - Identification and advocacy



## PAA's Recommendations

- ▶ Collaborative Teams
  - Time for school psychologists to meet with other Learning Team members
  - Determining learning profiles and effective, research-based, solutions to challenges
- ▶ Assessment for Learning
- ▶ Capacity Building
- ▶ Continuum of Support (Pyramid of Intervention)



## Resolution to Case Studies

**How COULD a school psychologist  
help with  
Jessie & James?**



## In Summary

- ▶ Challenge the old assumptions about the role of school psychologists
- ▶ Expand the role of school psychologists to utilize their full skill sets and expertise
- ▶ Engage more children in inclusive learning environments with enhanced professional supports for greater success in schools

**This is an exciting time for *Transformation!***



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