



# SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

*School psychologists* work with students in elementary and secondary schools. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and school personnel to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students; address students' learning and behavior problems; improve classroom management strategies or parenting skills; counter substance abuse; assess students with learning disabilities and gifted and talented students to help determine the best way to educate them; and improve teaching, learning, and socialization strategies. They also may evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs, prevention programs, behavior management procedures, and other services provided in the school setting.

## **EXPERIENCE & SKILLS**

Aspiring psychologists who are interested in direct patient care must be emotionally stable, mature, and able to inspire, and deal effectively with people. Patience and perseverance are vital qualities, because achieving results in the psychological treatment of patients or in research may take a long time.

- Compassion/sensitivity
- Patience
- Excellent communication skills
- Maturity
- Leadership skills
- Confidence

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

A specialist degree is required in most States for an individual to work as a school psychologist, although a few States still credential school psychologists with master's degrees. A specialist (Ed.S.) degree in school psychology requires a minimum of 3 years of full-time graduate study (at least 60 graduate semester hours) and a 1-year internship. Because their professional practice addresses educational and mental health components of students' development, school psychologists' training includes coursework in both education and psychology. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) awards the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) designation, which recognizes professional competency in school psychology at the national level. Currently, 26 States recognize the NCSP and allow those with the certification to transfer credentials from one State to another without taking a new certification exam. Requirements for the NCSP include the completion of 60 graduate semester hours in school psychology; a 1,200-hour internship, 600 hours of which must be completed in a school setting; and a passing score on the National School Psychology Examination.

## **SALARIES**

Salaries vary depending on work setting, years of experience, specialty and region or state.

Entry level: \$40,000	Individual/family services: \$42,640	School settings: \$58,360
Average: \$ 54,950	Outpatient care facilities: \$46,850	Health practitioner offices: \$64,460
Experienced: \$71,880		

## **EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS**

Employment of psychologists is expected to 18-26% for through 2014, because of increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies. Advancement is good and can occur when promoted to supervisor or by relocating to a larger more prestigious facility.

## **RELATED OCCUPATIONS**

- Counselors
- Social workers
- Special education
- Occupational Therapists

## **REFERENCES**

National Association of School Psychologists at <http://www.nasponline.org>

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov) 2005-06

