



North Dakota School Psychologist Parent Letter: COVID-19

April 13, 2020

The North Dakota Association of School Psychologists (NDASP) is here to lend a hand to parents and guardians, and would like to further clarify the roles of the school psychologist during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below you will find questions and answers relating to how school psychologists are providing ongoing support and consultative efforts during this time, in addition to other educational resources.

What is the role of school psychologists during COVID-19?

During this pandemic, NDASP recommends that ND School Psychologists continue to adhere as closely as possible to service delivery provided to all students that was taking place prior to COVID-19 outbreak while ensuring the health and safety of all stakeholders (e.g. students, staff, respective family members, community members, etc.). School Psychologists are still working to provide ongoing support relating to academic achievement, the promotion of positive behavior and mental health, support of diverse learners, as well as improve school-wide assessment.

The flexibility afforded to school districts by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has allowed each district to make important and unique decisions to meet the needs of their students. Decisions made by the school district that provides education to your child(ren) may vary throughout the state. School psychologists may be asked to adjust their roles in service delivery to facilitate the educational experience of your child(ren). NDASP strongly supports ND school districts utilize their School Psychologists to assist in meeting the needs of all students as they see fit during this unprecedented time

Will my child still be receiving formal assessments (ex. IQ testing)?

As of this time, the National Association of School Psychologists does not recommend completion of online assessment for evaluations that are typically completed face-to-face. As trained professionals we want to ensure each student is provided with the appropriate level of confidentiality, and test integrity as an accurate representation to confidently evaluate their true ability.

Further information from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, has encouraged all stakeholders (school personnel, parents/guardians, etc.) to uphold the advice as stated, “If an evaluation of a student with a disability requires a face-to-face assessment or observation, the evaluation would need to be delayed until school reopens. Initial evaluations and reevaluations that do not require face-to-face assessments or observations may take place while schools are closed, so long as a student’s parent or legal guardian consents.”

What about supporting my child at home? Can my child still access services?

Providing good faith efforts to allow students to access services from a School Psychologist serving their district, per parental consent, may take the form of virtual (e.g. Google Meets, Zoom, etc) or telephone calls. However, adhering to compliance of privacy laws, such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ([HIPAA](#)) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)), must be emphasized here.

These services should be provided when they can be done with the best of intentions to adhere to fidelity given the circumstances of this COVID-19 pandemic. Discussion between families and school on how/when service provision would be implemented in a family’s individual home is encouraged as it facilitates home-school collaboration which is a necessary component of effective service delivery.

What if my child already has an IEP in development during this time?

NDASP does encourage IEP meetings, and other meetings not requiring evaluation, continue to be completed within timelines by way of virtual or telephone formats. Districts will likely provide different options for these meetings to take place out of convenience for families. Documentation of the meeting will also likely be determined by each respective school district to adhere to or exceed DPI expectations and align to accessibility for families. School psychologists may or may not attend all meetings depending on their contributions to the meeting being held and the expectations of the district they serve.

What should I know as a parent/guardian moving forward?

NDASP and its members are here to support you during this stressful time. School Psychologist roles may evolve due to the needs of ND students and families. Please be assured we are working to promote safe and successful learning for ALL students. The North Dakota Association of School Psychologists would also like to encourage you, our parents & guardians, to consider the current state recommendations to promote a healthy learning environment for your child(ren) AND their peers. Continued positive home-school collaboration between schools and families will promote a fundamental learning experiences for our children because **#WeAreInThisTogether**.

If you have further questions related to the topics above, please contact:
ndaspinfo@gmail.com.