

TEACHERS' AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' SERVICES

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This is dedicated to my husband,
Jacob, because this accomplishment
is as much ours as mine.

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ABSTRACT

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by Megan M. Hassevoort

The current study examined key components of the teacher-school psychologist relationship in the elementary school setting by surveying a sample of general and special education teachers and school psychologists from the state of Michigan ($n = 133$ total). Participants reported on important personal and job-related characteristics for effective school psychology practice, as well as the utilization of Response to Intervention (RTI) components and school psychologists' participation in them.

Results indicated few differences between general and special education teachers and their perceptions of school psychology services. Teachers and school psychologists had significant differences in their perceptions of the degree to which they understood each others' job roles. The three groups of participants had differing views of which personal characteristics were most important for an effective school psychologist. School psychologists had significantly higher ratings of their competence in providing recommendations in primary areas of practice compared to teachers' ratings of the quality of recommendations they receive. All groups reported similar levels of current and desired school psychologist involvement in RTI components.

The results of this study suggest school psychologists are beginning to equalize their involvement in special and general education settings, perhaps because of the advent of educational reforms such as RTI. Some areas for potential conflict were evident, particularly in teachers' and school psychologists' understanding of key responsibilities for both positions, as well as in the quality of school psychologists' recommendations for learning and behavior.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To be effective in impacting students' academic and behavioral skills, school psychologists and teachers must engage in positive and productive professional relationships to prevent and intervene in areas of educational concern. It is in the best interest of school psychologists to not only act responsibly when working with teachers, but also to understand how teachers perceive their relationship with the psychologist along several dimensions. Failing to protect and develop these relationships threatens to undermine school psychologists' goal of promoting students' health and success.

Some studies have outlined teachers' definitions of important characteristics in school psychological practice. Based on results from a consultant effectiveness measure, Knoff, Sullivan, and Liu (1995) found teachers identified the top interpersonal skills for school psychologists as being effective at establishing rapport, displaying interest and a willingness to get involved. Behaviors such as being friendly, approachable, and flexible also were considered important. Similarly, Moon (2008) addressed various personal characteristics in her survey of school psychologists' service marketing. School psychologist-teacher dyads rated school psychologists highly overall, indicating that at least in terms of personal characteristics related to service marketing (e.g., approachability, availability, support, willingness to help), school psychologists were doing well. However, a friendly, approachable school psychologist may also be seen as ineffective. To be effective having a number of desirable personal characteristics is necessary, but may not be sufficient.

In terms of service provision in consultation, Knoff et al. (1995) found two broad areas teachers considered key to effective school psychology practice: 1) knowledge, process, and

application skills regarding consultation, and 2) interpersonal and problem-solving skills.

Overall, teachers appear to want consultants who display a balance between being an effective resource for solving problems and being open and welcoming to those needing help.

School Psychologists' Changing Job Roles

Although these studies shed some light on characteristics teachers perceived as contributing to effective school psychology practice, the role of school psychologist has been changing. The traditional role primarily involved carrying out psychoeducational assessments. This responsibility involves measuring student performance in academic, behavioral, and social areas to determine the need for special education services. As part of this process, school psychologists depend on teachers for accurate and detailed reports of students' classroom performance. Although this has been the most frequent way in which school psychologists and teachers relied on one another, now they are more frequently engaged in activities requiring increased collaboration.

Activities such as consultation as well as planning and implementing interventions are becoming more common job functions for school psychologists because of an increased emphasis on prevention-focused programs in the schools. This change in focus is partially rooted in changes in education law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA; United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2006) made allowances for identifying learning disabilities differently through use of a Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Prior to this act, school psychologists helped determine a student's need for services by administering an intelligence test and an achievement test, and noting whether the discrepancy between the two scores warranted individualized educational goals. Instead the RTI model involves using school-wide screening measures to identify students who are on track for

achieving educational goals, those at some risk for not meeting those goals, and those who are at-risk. Based on this information, students' needs are identified and students are placed in small group or individualized interventions as deemed necessary. These interventions must be research-based and students' progress must be monitored. Interventions are changed as needed to keep students moving in the right direction. Those who continue to require significant help may be considered in need of even more intensive research-based instruction, possibly through special education services.

Thus, with RTI school psychologists and teachers are working together more closely to identify difficulties for a student, or group of students, and develop, implement, and monitor intervention plans. Whereas traditional assessment practices at minimum require sharing of information between these two professionals, activities such as consultation and intervention require school psychologists and teachers to closely rely on each other's expertise, and trust one another to do what is most effective for the student(s) in question. Knowing how teachers perceive their relationships with their school psychologists and how they understand psychologists' new job roles are particularly important issues in ensuring quality educational services for students.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2010a; NASP, 2010c) outlined key areas in which school psychologists should be trained and practice. Their Model of Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services and Training Standards for school psychology programs (Table 1) highlight the areas of competency that go well beyond assessment. School psychologists need to be fluent in providing services at both the individual student (e.g., intervention, assessment) and systems (e.g., prevention, family) levels, within the context of data-based decision making, research, and consultation and collaboration (NASP,

Table 1. NASP Domains of School Psychology Training and Practice

1. Data-based decision-making and accountability
 2. Consultation and collaboration
 3. Interventions and instructional support to develop academic skills
 4. Interventions and mental health services to develop social and life skills
 5. School-wide practices to promote learning
 6. Preventive and responsive services
 7. Family-school collaboration services
 8. Diversity in development and learning
 9. Research and program evaluation
 10. Legal, ethical, and professional practice
-

2010a; 2010c). Although NASP cannot specifically proscribe that school psychologists be encouraging, pleasant, warm, or tactful (Knoff et al., 1995), school psychologists are expected to behave in an ethically responsible manner. According to the ethical standards of their practice, school psychologists are expected to show respect, have a commitment to justice, promote fairness, practice in line with the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, and be honest and cooperative (NASP, 2010b). To be effective in their job duties, both functionally and ethically, school psychologists need to be competent interpersonally as well as in handling their specific job roles.

General versus Special Education Teachers' Perceptions

The traditional assessment role for school psychologists involved significantly more time collaborating with special education teachers regarding initial or continuing special education eligibility and planning individualized education programs, whereas contacts with general education teachers focused on information gathering rather than a partnership. The current shift in practice favors intervention and prevention in the general education setting. In a prevention

model, school psychologists may spend a more equitable amount of time and resources interacting with both general and special education teachers.

Gilman and Medway (2007) found that compared to general education teachers, special education teachers more often worked with the school psychologist, reported being more knowledgeable of the position, found school psychologists more helpful to children and educators, and were more satisfied with their school psychologist. However, there was no difference in terms of special and general education teachers' opinions of the school psychologist's helpfulness toward children; both groups requested similar services of their school psychologists (e.g., assessment, consultation).

Consequently, because of their history, general and special education teachers may have different views regarding school psychologists' personal characteristics, effectiveness, and role expectations. Further, the views of both groups of teachers may change as they work with school psychologists in a more prevention-focused role.

RTI and the School Psychologist's Role

Tilly (2008) detailed the problem-solving model behind RTI. First, is there a problem, and what is it? Second, why is the problem happening? Third, what can be done about the problem? And last, did the intervention work? These four questions provide a context for a number of activities in which school psychologists can play a participatory or leadership role.

The first step highlights the necessity for benchmarking, which is the regular measurement of every student's skills to identify whether a student is at-risk or some risk for not meeting an educational goal. Through benchmarking students having trouble in a particular area can be identified. Once a student is identified as falling behind, school professionals need to determine why the problem is happening. This requires an inquest into the student's learning

history, as well as skills testing to identify specific skills the student knows and those he or she needs to be taught next. Then, skill deficits need to be addressed through a research-based intervention, tailored to the student's needs and implemented with fidelity, with the student's progress monitored regularly. This intervention should be changed if the student's gains are insufficient. If the intervention works, the intervention can be reduced or discontinued as appropriate. If the student is nonresponsive to a number of direct interventions, a special education evaluation may be warranted.

The increased use of RTI means a number of possible roles for school psychologists. To have a fully functional RTI system, schools need individuals to collect and analyze school-wide data, identify skills needing intervention, place students in groups, implement interventions, and monitor progress. Although a single school psychologist cannot handle all of these responsibilities for a building, he or she would be trained to participate in each area – from benchmarking to skills testing through progress monitoring. One foundation for school psychology training is data-based decision making, which is a core component to RTI's effectiveness (NASP 2010a, 2010c). In addition, school psychologists in NASP-approved programs receive instruction in methods of intervention at the systems level. Thus, school psychologists should be able to participate in an RTI transition not only in terms of the individual components of the prevention-intervention process, but also as a leader capable of aiding schools in making organizational shifts.

How much school psychologists are involved in the RTI process is unclear because there has been a paucity of research in this area, with little current data available. A survey conducted in the fall 2010 found that approximately a third of the 382 school psychologists surveyed were involved in 11 of 14 identified RTI components, with a maximum of 71% of

participants indicating frequent involvement in *a procedure used when students do not succeed in the general education curriculum* (Unruh & McKellar, 2013b). Of those school psychologists, 13% indicated their school had not implemented any RTI practices, with the majority (49.4%) reporting their school had implemented only some RTI components (Unruh & McKellar, 2013a). Aside from this study, a PsycInfo search using the terms *school psychologist, RTI, role, and effectiveness or satisfaction* resulted in no peer-reviewed studies. Also there appears to be no research as to whether teachers prefer having school psychologists play a smaller or larger role in the RTI process. Although school psychologists are trained in skills necessary for successful implementation of an RTI system, the degree to which school psychologists are using these skills to promote these practices is not clear.

Purposes of this Study

Although several studies suggested personal characteristics teachers felt were important for effective school psychology practice (Knoff et al., 1995; Moon, 2008), the studies focused primarily on one aspect of practice, that of consultation. Further, since those studies were conducted, the movement toward RTI has changed the roles of school psychologists and both general and special education teachers toward a more prevention-focused process.

Thus, it seems an updated examination of teachers' and school psychologists' perspectives regarding personal characteristics and professional competencies that contribute to effective school psychology practice under an RTI model would be useful. To that end, this study involved a survey of the perspectives of both general and special education teachers and their school psychologists. The survey asked each member of the three professional groups to rate school psychologists' personal qualities, job-related competencies, and effectiveness.

Unlike prior surveys focused on consultation, this survey examined the practice of school psychology in general.

Because of the limited amount of research on school psychologists' involvement in the RTI process, an additional section of the survey examined the perspectives of these three professional groups regarding how involved school psychologists are, and how involved they would like them to be, in the different RTI components.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

Participants were a randomly selected group of 112 general and 112 special education teachers and 112 school psychologists working in elementary schools in the state of Michigan. The sample was limited to professionals working in this setting because one focus of the study was on RTI, which tends to be an elementary school initiative. Because nearly all the literature on implementation of RTI focuses on the early grades, use of these procedures would likely occur at the elementary school level.

The study was limited to one state rather than a national sample for several reasons. First, the role of the school psychologist and the change to RTI are both partly based on state law. By focusing on teachers and school psychologists in a single state, the impact of legal regulations on school psychologists' job roles and expectations should be the same across districts. Also, schools within a state would have the same regulations regarding special education eligibility and school personnel should have a similar understanding of the implementation of RTI in their schools. By controlling for state regulations and job expectations, the study could focus on the perception of the school psychologist without these potential confounds. Second, to obtain a complete picture of the perception of school psychologists and their role in RTI practices, school psychologists need to be consulted. However, NASP has restricted access to its members for research purposes because school psychologists were being overly recruited as participants in research, resulting in a nationwide problem of survey fatigue. This restriction makes obtaining a national sample of school psychologists difficult at best. See Table 2 for a summary of demographic information of the survey participants.

Table 2. Demographic Information.

Characteristic	General Education <i>N</i> = 44	Special Education <i>N</i> = 51	Teachers <i>N</i> = 95	School Psychologists <i>N</i> = 38
Gender				
Male	9.1%	3.9%	6.3%	13.2%
Female	84.1%	82.4%	83.2%	78.9%
Years Working				
First year	0%	2.0%	1.1%	7.9%
1 to 5	6.8%	9.8%	8.4%	7.9%
6 to 10	13.6%	17.6%	15.8%	39.5%
11 to 15	36.4%	15.7%	25.3%	18.4%
16 to 20	20.5%	23.5%	22.1%	10.5%
21+	22.7%	31.4%	27.4%	15.8%
Degree				
Bachelors	2.3%	5.9%	4.2%	-
Bachelors+	25.0%	23.5%	24.2%	-
Masters	20.5%	27.5%	24.2%	18.4%
Masters+	45.5%	39.2%	42.1%	-
Specialist	-	-	-	68.4%
Ph.D./Ed.D.	0%	0%	0%	13.2%
Grade Teaching				
K	4.5%	-	-	-
1	13.6%	-	-	-
2	20.5%	-	-	-
3	20.5%	-	-	-
4	15.9%	-	-	-
5	11.4%	-	-	-
6	6.8%	-	-	-
Multiple	0%	-	-	-

Table 2. Demographic Information (continued).

Characteristic	General Education <i>N</i> = 44	Special Education <i>N</i> = 51	Teachers <i>N</i> = 95	School Psychologists <i>N</i> = 38
Age				
21-30	6.8%	9.8%	8.4%	23.7%
31-40	34.1%	29.4%	31.6%	26.3%
41-50	31.8%	33.3%	32.6%	23.7%
51-60	20.5%	27.5%	24.2%	23.7%
61+	6.8%	0%	3.2%	2.6%
Percent of time spent on assessment				
0-20%	-	-	-	7.9%
21-40%	-	-	-	13.2%
41-60%	-	-	-	31.6%
61-80%	-	-	-	18.4%
81-100%	-	-	-	23.7%
Percent of time spent on RTI				
0-20%	-	-	-	26.3%
21-40%	-	-	-	39.5%
41-60%	-	-	-	15.8%
61-80%	-	-	-	2.6%
81-100%	-	-	-	7.9%
RTI Training				
	77.3%	90.2%	84.2%	94.7%

Instrument

Two forms of the survey were developed for this study; one for general and special education teachers, and the other for school psychologists. Parts 1 and 2 of the teacher survey addressed the first purpose of the study, to examine teacher perceptions of school psychologists' personal and job-related characteristics that contribute to effective practice. Parts 3 and 4 of the survey addressed the study's second purpose, to obtain teachers' perspectives on the degree to

which RTI was being implemented in their school as well as the degree to which school psychologists are, and should be involved with RTI.

Part 1, *Basic Information*, asked about the degree of involvement of the school psychologist in the teacher's practice. Part 2, *Qualities of My School Psychologist*, asked teachers to rate the degree to which their school psychologist displays various personal characteristics and job-related competencies related to effective practice. Teachers were also asked to rank the top three characteristics leading to effective practice for school psychologists. Part 3, *Response to Intervention*, asked teachers to indicate which of 11 common RTI components his or her school employs. Part 4 addressed which components his or her school psychologist participates in and to what degree teachers think school psychologists should be involved in various RTI components. The teachers were asked to provide demographic information, and a section for additional comments was included at the end of the survey.

Items for Part 1, the *Basic Information* section on the teacher questionnaire, were based on studies demonstrating that interacting with a school psychologist (Pohlman, Hoffman, Dodds, & Pryzwansky, 1998) and having knowledge of the psychologist's job role are important for effective practice (Pohlman et al., 1998; Wilson, Gutkin, Hagen, & Oats, 1998). Thus, the first four items addressed a progression of interactions between the teacher and the school psychologist, from having met to working on an intervention for a student. The last question asked whether the school psychologist had clearly explained his or her job role. Wording for these items is based on Moon's (2008) Teacher Social Marketing Scale.

Five items for Part 2, *Qualities of My School Psychologist*, measured personal qualities relevant to effective relationships between teachers and school psychologists. These items were adapted from the Teacher Social Marketing Scale (Moon, 2008), for which expert review was

used by Moon in developing the scale. Items on the scale appeared to have social validity. Information on technical adequacy of the scale was demonstrated through factor analysis and measures of internal consistency.

Factor analysis of Moon's scale suggested which items were the most relevant. The five most relevant items were included in questionnaires for this study because other items were either addressed in Part 1 or were very similar to the five most relevant qualities (e.g., *not easy to find, easy to get in touch with, too busy to help me*). Items included were 1) *is supportive; offers services* was rewritten as 2) *proactive in offering his/her services; difficult to communicate with* was adapted as 3) *easy to talk to; makes him/herself available* and *never available* were rewritten positively as 4) *available when I need help* and 5) *easy to contact*. The item *approachable* was retained. Support for these items is also provided by Pohlman et al.'s (1998) research, which highlighted the need for accessible service providers (*available when I need help, easy to contact*); by Stenger, Tollefson, and Fine (1992), who found that offering their services (*proactive in offering his/her services*) was important for effective practice; as well as O'Keefe and Medway (1997), who found that persuaders who are sympathetic (*easy to talk to, supportive*) are more effective.

Additional items were added to address the three most important areas of interpersonal skills identified by Knoff et al. (1995): *effective at establishing rapport, good at displaying interest, and willing to get involved*. The item *on good terms with most teachers* was added as an indication of the teachers' perceptions of the general interpersonal climate between the school psychologist and teachers. O'Keefe and Medway's (1997) investigation into persuasion research suggested follow-up is key to ensuring recommendations are implemented. Consequently the item *good at follow-through* was included.

Job-related competencies in the second half of Part 2 were based on questions from Dean's (1980) study of experienced and preservice teachers' perceptions of school psychologists' responsibilities (*learning problems, psychological tests*), Gilman and Gabriel's (2004) study of teacher perceptions of school psychologists (*provision of helpful services, involvement in working with families*), Gilmore and Chandy's (1973) examination of the same topic (*knowledge regarding the responsibilities of the teacher, emotional development, managing classroom behavior*), and NASP's (2010c) areas of training (*diverse students, crisis intervention, prevention*). Items were adapted for flow and relevancy, and two items were added to make the questionnaires more comprehensive (*behavior problems, knowledge of the limits of the classroom when making recommendations*).

To compare which competencies teachers and school psychologists felt were most important for effective practice, teachers were asked to rank order the three most important personal qualities for school psychologists and the three most important areas of competency. School psychologists were asked to rate the importance of each of the areas of competency and rank their top three personal characteristics for effective school psychology practice. Items addressing the helpfulness of school psychology services were adapted from Gilman and Medway's (2007) survey of general and special education teachers' perceptions of school psychologists. The RTI components provided in the fourth and fifth sections of the survey were based on the core RTI principles outlined by Batsche et al. (2005) and Tilly (2008).

The school psychologists' survey was similar to the teachers' survey. For Parts 1 and 2, school psychologists were asked how competent they felt in providing recommendations in various areas, how well they understood teachers' responsibilities, how important specific job-related competencies were, and they were asked to rank the top three personal characteristics for

an effective school psychologist. Part 3 items for the school psychologists' questionnaire addressed RTI. Some items from the teacher questionnaire were revised to make this section a self-report measure regarding the components of RTI in which school psychologists participated, and those in which they would like to participate more, less, or the same amount. School psychologists were asked to report the RTI components used by their buildings. At the end of the survey, school psychologists were also asked for their demographic information and they were provided room for written comments.

Prior to implementing either survey, the teacher survey was reviewed by four teachers: two special education teachers, and two general education teachers. The teachers had a minimum of 11 years of teaching experience. The school psychologist survey was reviewed by six school psychology graduate students in their second year of the program who were engaged in a 600-hour practicum. All students had taken courses in assessment, academic and behavioral intervention, and ethics, and were engaged in classes addressing consultation and crisis intervention. Feedback from the teachers and school psychology students as well as feedback from three school psychology faculty was used to revise items for clarity. Additional changes on this version included changing response methods regarding the importance of school psychologist characteristics, and simplifying school psychologist RTI ratings for a more streamlined survey.

Procedure

The method of collecting information from this survey was based on *The Tailored Design Method for Surveys* (Dillman, 2007). Dillman's method is designed to maximize response rate from the general population. Using this method, he predicted an approximately 67% return rate. Repeated mailings, such as a pre-notice letter or thank-you/reminder card, are written in ways to

appeal to potential participants and encourage their participation. The method is composed of five steps: pre-notice letter, mailing the survey with a cover letter, providing an incentive, sending a thank you/reminder postcard, and re-mailing the survey to non-respondents after a period of time. This study followed each of these steps.

Mailings were sent to the principal of each school selected to protect the identity of the teachers and school psychologist, and to streamline the mailing process. Another reason for sending the materials to principals was that teacher and school psychologist contact information is not as up-to-date or as available as that of the school principal. Involving an administrator may have also helped increase response rate of some individuals.

According to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (2012), there were 56 open and active intermediate school districts (ISDs) in the state of Michigan in 2012. Two school districts within each of the ISDs were chosen, and one elementary school from each of those districts was targeted for surveys, resulting in a total of 112 elementary school buildings identified for participation. Both districts and the elementary schools were randomly selected by assigning each district or school to a number (e.g., ABC Elementary is choice 1, XYZ Elementary is choice 2, etc.). A random number generator at www.random.org was used to select two numbers within the range of choices to identify the groups that would be used. If a district had only one consolidated (grades K-12) school, another district in that ISD was randomly selected using the same method. Elementary schools that were combined with a middle school and had the same principal were removed from the sample to eliminate any confusion as to which professionals were being targeted by the surveys. Once two elementary schools from each ISD in the state of Michigan were identified, contact information for each of the schools' principals was located via the Internet.

The principal was first sent a pre-notice letter (Appendix A) briefly explaining the study, its purpose, and a description of the survey that would be used. Within 2 weeks, the pre-notice letter was followed by the surveys (Appendices B and C). The principal was asked to give one teacher survey to a general education teacher, one to a special education teacher, and the school psychologist survey to the school psychologist for that school.

The principal's packet and the surveys were accompanied by a cover letter (Appendices D, E, and F) describing the research, the confidentiality of the participant's responses, and a description of how those responses would be used. A separate contact information card (Appendix G) accompanied each survey. Teachers and school psychologists could return this card with the survey and be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$50 gift cards. The principal corresponding to each of the two winners also was also given a \$50 gift card for his or her assistance in this project.

Return envelopes were coded with a randomly assigned number corresponding to the participant's school and the position of teacher or school psychologist. A list of the numbers and corresponding schools was maintained in a secure location by the investigator and deleted once it was no longer needed. Returned surveys were separated from their envelopes and contact cards upon receipt. Once the participant was marked off the master list, the envelope was shredded to eliminate any possible connection between the participant and his or her responses. Surveys were assigned a separate random number for data analysis.

Two to three weeks after the initial mailing, a follow-up postcard (Appendix H) was sent to the principals whose teacher(s) and/or school psychologist had not returned their surveys. The card thanked them for their support and served as a gentle reminder to encourage return of the surveys.

Finally, within 2 weeks after sending the postcard, a follow-up letter (Appendix I) was sent to principals of schools with outstanding surveys. This letter, which encouraged participation to ensure the study's success, was accompanied by additional surveys in the event that any may have been misplaced.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Return Rate

Surveys were sent to 112 schools, and at least one survey was returned from 59% ($n = 66$) of these schools. Of the 336 teacher and school psychologist surveys sent to participating schools, 141 were returned for a return rate of 42%. However, 8 were unusable leaving a total usable return rate of 40%. Of the 112 surveys sent to school psychologists, 42 (38%) were returned. Four were unusable (1 blank, 1 filled out by a school counselor, 2 arriving post-analysis), resulting in a 34% usable return rate. Of the 112 surveys sent to special education teachers, 51 were returned (46%) and all were usable. General education teachers returned 48 of 112 surveys (42%) with 4 unusable (2 filled out regarding a school counselor, 2 with a significant number of questions skipped), leading to a 39% usable return rate.

Table 3 presents a comparison of demographic information between the sample from this study and samples used in other studies. Compared to Center for Educational Performance and Information (2012) data describing Michigan teachers from 2007 to 2012, the current sample had more female teachers, more teachers with more experience and older teachers with more education. Gender differences are not surprising because the current study focused on an elementary-school population, and elementary schools typically employ more female teachers than junior- or senior-high schools do. The more years of experience, though a deviation from the average percentage of teachers in Michigan, provided a sample of teachers with more experience from which to draw their conclusions regarding the effectiveness of school psychologists.

Table 3. Population Characteristics of Teachers and School Psychologists

Characteristic	Current Study Teachers <i>N</i> = 95	Michigan Teachers (CEPI, 2012) <i>N</i> = 102,208	Current Study School Psychologists <i>N</i> = 38	NASP (2010) <i>N</i> = 2544
Gender				
Male	6.3%	23.5%	13.2%	23.4%
Female	83.2%	76.5%	78.9%	76.6%
Years Working				
First year	1.1%	8.0%	7.9%	
1 to 5	8.4%	20.8%	7.9%	
6 to 10	15.8%	19.5%	39.5%	
11 to 15	25.3%	23.9%	18.4%	-
16 to 20	22.1%	13.0%	10.5%	
21+	27.4%	14.9%	15.8%	
Degree				
Bachelors	28.4%	37.3%	-	-
Masters	66.3%	60.3%	18.4%	25.1%
Specialist	-	-	68.4%	45.8%
Ph.D./Ed.D.	0%	0.5%	13.2%	24.2%
Age				
21-30	8.4%	12.2%		
31-40	31.6%	30.8%		
41-50	32.6%	29.1%	<i>M</i> = 41.0 years	<i>M</i> = 47.4 years
51-60	24.2%	21.3%		
61+	3.2%	6.7%		

No data were available describing the demographic information for Michigan school psychologists. However, compared to National Association of School Psychologists' data (Castillo, Curtis, Chappel, & Cunningham, 2011) describing their membership, the current sample had a similar gender distribution (though the current study had a number of missing values for this item), similar age, and higher overall education level. The current sample of

teachers (both general and special education) and school psychologists appears quite similar to other samples of teachers and school psychologists, suggesting that results from this survey may generalize to these professional groups in other states.

Relationship between Teachers and School Psychologists

In the results that follow, when several comparisons are made simultaneously, the Bonferroni correction was used to control the error rate (i.e. reduce the probability of false positives). Bonferroni-adjusted α levels are noted where applied.

Involvement

Nearly all (94.7%) special and general education teachers indicated they had at least met their school psychologist. See Table 4 for these data. The next most frequent interaction between teachers and school psychologists was working on a special education referral (84.2%), followed by having the school psychologist visit the teacher's classroom (74.7%) and working together on an intervention (68.4%). About half (52.6%) of teacher respondents reported having had a clear description of the school psychologist's job role. Nearly all general and special education teachers reported having met the school psychologist, with somewhat more special education teachers having interacted with their school psychologists than general education teachers (98% versus 90.9%, respectively).

The greatest disparity between the two groups occurred for the question *my school psychologist has clearly explained his/her job role to me*. A two-way contingency table analysis indicated a significant difference between special and general education teachers' reports of the degree of involvement with their school psychologist. The two variables were job

(general education teacher, special education teacher), and endorsement of involvement in manner in question (yes, no). A significant difference was found only for the item *clearly explained his or her job to me*, $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 11.30, p = .001, \phi = .35$ (corrected $\alpha = .01$). To this question, 35 of 51 (69%) special education teachers answered *yes*, compared to 15 of 44 (34%) general education teachers. Thus, significantly fewer general education teachers had school psychologists explain their job roles to them.

Table 4. School Psychologists' Involvement with Teachers

My School Psychologist Has ¹ :	Special Ed		General Ed		Combined	
	<i>n</i>	% Yes	<i>n</i>	% Yes	<i>n</i>	% Yes
Met me	51	98.0	44	90.9	95	94.7
Visited my classroom	50	80.4	44	68.2	94	74.7
Worked with me on SPED referral	51	92.2	44	75.0	95	84.2
Worked with me on intervention	51	72.5	44	63.6	95	68.4
Clearly explained	51	68.6	44	34.1	95	52.6

¹Response options were *yes* and *no*.

Job Understanding

No significant difference was found between special education and general education teachers in terms of their ratings of school psychologists' understanding of teachers' jobs or their understanding of the limits of the classroom setting when making recommendations. (See Table 5 for mean ratings.) Ratings ranged from 0 to 2, with 0 indicating a teacher disagreed with the statement that their school psychologist understands the teacher's job role, and 2 indicating the teacher agreed with this statement. However, school psychologists' ratings of their own understanding of teachers' jobs and the limits of the classroom setting were both significantly higher than general and special education teachers' perspectives combined (understanding teachers' jobs, $t(127) = -2.18, p = .03, d = .43, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.46, -.02]$; and understanding the limits

of their classrooms, $t(128) = -2.93, p = .004, d = .58, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.64, -.12]$). Teachers' mean response to these items indicate that on average, teachers believe school psychologists have a moderate degree of understanding of teachers' job roles and the limits of the classroom setting when making recommendations. However, school psychologists thought they had a better understanding of teachers' jobs and classroom limitations than teachers thought school psychologists did.

Table 5. Ratings of School Psychologists' Understanding of Teachers' Jobs

	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers		School Psychologists	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>
School psychologist understands responsibilities of teacher's job ¹	49	1.7	43	1.6	92	1.7	37	1.9
School psychologist understands limits of the classroom ¹	50	1.5	42	1.4	92	1.4	38	1.8
Teacher understands the responsibilities of the school psychologist's job ¹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.2

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

School psychologists responded to an additional item, *teachers at my school understand the responsibilities of my job* (cited in Table 5). A paired-sample *t*-test showed a significant difference between school psychologists' ratings of their own understanding of teachers' jobs ($M = 1.89$) versus school psychologists' perception of teachers' understanding of school psychologists' job role ($M = 1.24$), $t(36) = 5.0, p < .001, d = 1.18, 95\% \text{ CI } (.39, .91)$. This result suggests that school psychologists believe teachers do not have as good an understanding of the school psychologist's job role as school psychologists do of the teacher's job role.

School Psychologists' Helpfulness

No significant difference in ratings of school psychologists' helpfulness was found between the two groups of teachers. Similar to the ratings of job understanding, on average teachers indicated that school psychologists provide services that are moderately helpful to students ($M = 1.62$), to the teachers participating in this study ($M = 1.56$), to other teachers ($M = 1.46$), and to families ($M = 1.43$). See Table 6 for these mean ratings.

Table 6. Mean Ratings of School Psychologists' Helpfulness.

Helpful to ¹ :	Special Ed $n = 51$	General Ed $n = 44$	All Teachers $n = 95$
Students	1.7	1.6	1.6
Other Teachers	1.5	1.4	1.5
Families	1.5	1.3	1.4
Me	1.7	1.5	1.6

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

Presence of Personal Characteristics

Special education and general education teachers' ratings of important personal characteristics for school psychologists were compared. Table 7 presents these mean ratings. No significant differences between the mean ratings of these two teacher groups were observed. Thus, both groups of teachers had similar perspectives regarding personal characteristics displayed by school psychologists. For the majority of characteristics, most teachers agreed that their school psychologist displayed each personal quality. The personal characteristic teachers indicated their school psychologists demonstrated most was *approachable* (84.2% agreed). Being *proactive in offering services* had the lowest rating (52.6% overall) and had the most teachers (17.9%) indicating that their school psychologist did not display this characteristic. The next lowest rating was *available when I need help*, which had a disagreement rating of 13.7%.

Table 7. Ratings of School Psychologists' Personal Characteristics.

School psychologist is ¹ :	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>
Approachable	51	1.9	44	1.8	95	1.8
Easy to contact	51	1.8	44	1.5	95	1.6
Available when I need help	51	1.6	44	1.3	95	1.4
Supportive	50	1.8	44	1.6	94	1.7
Easy to talk to	51	1.8	44	1.6	95	1.7
Good at follow-through	51	1.7	44	1.5	95	1.6
Willing to get involved	50	1.8	44	1.6	94	1.7
Good at displaying interest	51	1.8	44	1.6	95	1.7
Effective at building rapport	51	1.6	43	1.4	94	1.5
On good terms with most teachers	51	1.6	44	1.5	95	1.6
Proactive in offering services	51	1.5	44	1.2	95	1.4

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

Importance of Personal Characteristics

Special education teachers, general education teachers, and psychologists each had differing views regarding the most important personal characteristics for an effective school psychologist. Table 8 displays these data. Special education teachers indicated the following characteristics were most important: *approachable* (19.6%), *follow-through* (17.6%), and *willing to get involved* (13.7%). General education teachers indicated the following: *available when I need help* (36.4%), *supportive* (15.9%), and *approachable* (12.1%). The most common first choice for school psychologists was *follow-through* (18.4%), followed by *building rapport* (15.8%), and then *easy to talk to* (13.2%).

Table 8. Most Important School Psychologist Personal Characteristics.

Rank	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers		School Psychologists	
	Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%
First	Approachable (<i>n</i> = 10)	19.6	Available when I need help (<i>n</i> = 12)	36.4	Available when I need help (<i>n</i> = 16)	16.8	Follow- through (<i>n</i> = 7)	18.4
Second	Follow-through (<i>n</i> = 9)	17.6	Supportive (<i>n</i> = 7)	15.9	Approachable (<i>n</i> = 14)	14.7	Building rapport (<i>n</i> = 6)	15.8
Third	Willing to get involved (<i>n</i> = 7)	13.7	Approachable (<i>n</i> = 4)	12.1	Follow- through (<i>n</i> = 12)	12.6	Easy to talk to (<i>n</i> = 5)	13.2

Presence of Job-Related Competencies

For school psychologists, 86% or more agreed they were competent to provide recommendations in 6 of the 9 job-related competencies. The area school psychologists rated themselves as least competent to provide effective recommendations was in *crisis intervention* (63.2% said they felt competent). All school psychologists agreed they felt competent to provide recommendations regarding *learning problems* and *psychological tests*.

Both general and special education teachers had more variability in their responses to the question of whether their school psychologists provide helpful recommendations in these areas compared to school psychologists' perspectives. In all nine areas teachers (general and special educators) had at least some degree of disagreement with the statement that their school psychologists provided helpful recommendations. The area in which the largest percentage (76.8%) of general and special education teachers (combined) agreed their school psychologists provided helpful recommendations was *psychological tests*. The largest percentage (16.8%) of general and special education teachers (combined) disagreed that their school psychologists

provided helpful recommendations regarding *managing classroom behavior*, followed by *crisis intervention* (11.6%). Both teachers and school psychologists saw *crisis intervention* as an area where school psychologists could improve in making recommendations, but school psychologists thought they were better at making recommendations for managing classroom behavior than teachers thought they were.

No significant differences were found between general and special education teachers' responses regarding the usefulness of school psychologists' recommendations.

When school psychologists' ratings of their competence in providing recommendations were compared to those of the perceptions of both teacher groups combined in terms of the helpfulness of the recommendations, there were significant differences for each area of job-related competency ($p \leq .003$ for all comparisons). See Table 9 for the results of these comparisons. In all cases, school psychologists' mean ratings were significantly higher than both general and special education teachers' ratings.

Table 9. Ratings of All Teachers' and School Psychologists' Perceptions of Recommendation Helpfulness.

Recommendation Area ¹	All Teachers			School Psychologists			<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Learning problems	95	1.6	0.6	38	2.0	0.0	-3.9 (131)*	0.8
Behavior problems	95	1.4	0.7	38	2.0	0.2	-4.4 (131)*	0.9
Emotional development	94	1.5	0.6	38	1.9	0.3	-3.9 (131)*	0.8
Managing classroom behavior	95	1.2	0.7	38	1.8	0.4	-5.1 (131)*	1.0
Psychological tests	94	1.7	0.5	38	2.0	0.0	-3.1 (131)*	0.6
Needs of diverse students	94	1.4	0.7	38	1.8	0.4	-3.2 (130)*	0.6
Working with families	95	1.3	0.7	38	1.9	0.3	-4.6 (131)*	0.9
Crisis intervention	95	1.2	0.6	38	1.6	0.5	-3.2 (131)*	0.6
Prevention	95	1.3	0.7	38	1.7	0.4	-4.0 (131)*	0.8

*Comparisons significant at a corrected $\alpha = .006$.

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

To examine these differences, school psychologists' ratings were compared separately to those of general education teachers' and of special education teachers' (corrected $\alpha = .006$). Ratings of helpfulness of recommendations were significantly different for each competency between school psychologists and general education teachers ($p \leq .002$ for all comparisons); school psychologists' mean ratings of their competency were significantly higher than their ratings from general education teachers in all 9 areas. See Table 10 for these results.

Table 10. Ratings of General Education Teachers' and School Psychologists' Perceptions of Recommendation Helpfulness.

Recommendation Area	General Ed. Teachers			School Psychologists			<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>) [*]	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Learning problems	44	1.5	0.6	38	2.0	0.0	-5.1 (80)*	1.1
Behavior problems	44	1.4	0.7	38	2.0	0.2	-4.8 (80)*	1.1
Emotional development	44	1.4	0.7	38	1.9	0.3	-4.1 (80)*	0.9
Managing classroom behavior	44	1.2	0.8	38	1.8	0.4	-4.7 (80)*	1.1
Psychological tests	43	1.6	0.6	38	2.0	0.0	-4.4 (79)*	1.0
Needs of diverse students	43	1.2	0.6	38	1.8	0.4	-4.7 (79)*	1.1
Working with families	44	1.3	0.7	38	1.9	0.3	-4.8 (80)*	1.1
Crisis intervention	44	1.2	0.7	38	1.6	0.5	-3.2 (80)*	0.7
Prevention	44	1.2	0.7	38	1.7	0.4	-4.5 (80)*	1.0

*Comparisons significant at a corrected $\alpha = .006$.

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

When school psychologists' ratings were compared to ratings from special education teachers, significant differences were found for *learning problems* ($p = .004$), *behavior problems* ($p < .001$), *emotional development* ($p = .001$), *managing classroom behavior* ($p < .001$), *working with families* ($p < .001$), and *prevention* ($p = .003$). Table 11 displays the results of these comparisons. Thus, school psychologists rated their competence in writing recommendations

higher in 6 of 9 areas than special education teachers rated their school psychologists' competence.

Table 11. Ratings of Special Education Teachers' and School Psychologists' Perceptions of Recommendation Helpfulness.

Recommendation Area	Special Ed. Teachers			School Psychologists			<i>t</i> (<i>df</i> = 87)	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Learning problems	51	1.7	0.6	38	2.0	0.0	-3.0*	0.6
Behavior problems	51	1.5	0.7	38	2.0	0.2	-3.8*	0.8
Emotional development	50	1.5	0.6	38	1.9	0.3	-3.3*	0.7
Managing classroom behavior	51	1.2	0.7	38	1.8	0.4	-4.8*	1.0
Psychological tests	51	1.9	0.4	38	2.0	0.0	-1.9	0.4
Needs of diverse students	51	1.6	0.4	38	1.8	0.4	-1.8	0.4
Working with families	51	1.4	0.3	38	1.9	0.3	-4.0*	0.9
Crisis intervention	51	1.3	0.6	38	1.6	0.5	-2.6	0.6
Prevention	51	1.3	0.6	38	1.7	0.4	-3.0*	0.7

* Comparisons significant at a corrected $\alpha = .006$.

¹Response options were *disagree* (0), *neither agree nor disagree* (1), and *agree* (2).

Response to Intervention

Component Use

School psychologists and teachers varied in their reports of the use of RTI components in their schools (see Table 12). Overall teachers reported a higher frequency of use of RTI components than school psychologists. All teachers reported a minimum component use of 72.6% (*data team*) and a maximum of 92.6% (*progress monitoring*). School psychologists reported a minimum component use of 42.1% (*special education eligibility based on RTI*) and a maximum of 94.7% (*benchmarking/screening*).

A contingency table analysis indicated a significant difference between school psychologists, general education teachers, and special education teachers in their reporting of the use of RTI components. The variables were job (school psychologist, general education teacher, special education teacher), and use (yes, no) (corrected $\alpha = 0.005$). Significant differences were evident between the groups for *research-supported curricula* (Pearson $\chi^2 (2, N = 124) = 14.88, p = .001$, Cramér's $V = .35$), *collecting school-wide data on behavior* (Pearson $\chi^2 (2, N = 120) = 16.16, p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .37$), *skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention* (Pearson $\chi^2 (2, N = 126) = 15.01, p = .001$, Cramér's $V = .35$), *decision-making based on data* (Pearson $\chi^2 (2, N = 129) = 10.48, p = .005$, Cramér's $V = .29$), and *special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention* (Pearson $\chi^2 (2, N = 122) = 33.06, p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .52$). Significantly fewer school psychologists indicated the use of these components than either general or special education teachers.

Table 12. Reported Use of RTI Components in Michigan Elementary Schools.

Component ¹	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers		School Psychologists	
	<i>n</i>	% Yes	<i>n</i>	% Yes	<i>n</i>	% Yes	<i>n</i>	% Yes
Research-Based Curricula	49	88.2	43	88.6	92	88.4	38	76.3
Benchmarking/Screening	50	94.1	44	88.6	94	91.6	36	94.7
School-wide data on behavior	51	86.3	44	79.5	95	83.2	38	71.1
“Data Team”	51	74.5	44	70.5	95	72.6	38	65.8
Grade-level team meetings	51	92.2	44	81.8	95	87.4	38	78.9
Tiers/groups	51	80.4	44	72.7	95	76.8	38	71.1
Skills testing	51	84.3	43	81.8	94	83.2	38	60.5
Consultation	51	92.2	44	88.6	95	90.5	38	78.9
Progress-monitoring	50	92.2	44	93.2	94	92.6	38	86.8
Decision-making based on data	51	94.1	44	86.4	95	90.5	38	76.3
Sp.Ed. eligibility based on RTI	51	84.3	44	75.0	95	80.0	38	42.1

¹Response options were *yes*, *no*, and *do not know*.

Current School Psychologist Involvement

About 66% of school psychologists reported spending up to 40% of their time on RTI-related responsibilities (42.1% reported spending more than 60% of their time on assessment-related responsibilities). School psychologists and teachers had similar ratings of actual or perceived school psychologist involvement in RTI components at their schools. Areas with the greatest disparity in ratings between teachers and school psychologists were using *data teams* (35.8% teachers combined, 50% school psychologists), *grade level team meetings* (20% teachers, 34.2% school psychologists), *progress monitoring* (46.3% teachers, 36.8% school psychologists), and *decision-making based on data* (55.8% teachers, 92.1% school psychologists). On average, 40.4% of teachers perceived that their school psychologist was involved in at least one RTI component at their schools; similarly 45.2% of school psychologists reported involvement in at least one RTI component. See Table 13 for these results.

Table 13. School Psychologists' Involvement in RTI Components.

Component ¹	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers		School Psychologists	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Research-Based Curricula	50	23.5	44	22.7	94	23.2	38	18.4
Benchmarking/Screening	50	43.1	44	31.8	94	37.9	38	39.5
School-wide data on behavior	50	41.2	44	36.4	94	38.9	38	34.2
“Data Team”	50	45.1	44	25.0	94	35.8	38	50
Grade-level team meetings	49	25.5	44	13.6	93	20.0	38	34.2
Tiers/groups	48	25.5	44	15.9	92	21.1	38	34.2
Skills testing	50	39.2	44	38.6	94	38.9	38	34.2
Consultation	50	62.7	44	56.8	94	60.0	38	57.9
Progress-monitoring	50	56.9	44	34.1	94	46.3	38	36.8
Decision-making based on data	50	68.6	44	40.9	94	55.8	38	92.1
Sped eligibility based on RTI	50	76.5	44	54.5	94	66.3	38	65.8

¹Response options were *yes*, *no*, and *do not know*, and *not used by my school*.

A contingency table indicated no significant differences between groups in terms of their perceived school psychologist involvement (general and special education teachers) and what school psychologists reported as their involvement in RTI. The two variables were job (school psychologist, general education teacher, special education teacher), and participation (yes, no). This result suggests that teachers and school psychologists have similar perceptions regarding of the amount of involvement of school psychologists in the various RTI components.

Desired School Psychologist Involvement

In terms of desired level of involvement of school psychologists in RTI component implementation, overall frequency trends showed teachers and school psychologists agreed on some components (see Table 14). All groups wanted the same or more school psychologist involvement in *skills testing*, *interventions*, and *special education eligibility based on RTI*. A minority of regular and special education teachers (6.3% maximum) reported wanting less school psychologist involvement in all other RTI components. School psychologists generally indicated wanting the same or more involvement in RTI components, with the exceptions of: *benchmarking*, *collecting school-wide data*, and *data teams to review benchmarking data*. Only 2.6% of school psychologists indicated that they would like less involvement in these areas.

Table 14. Desired Involvement of School Psychologists in RTI Components.

Component ¹	Special Ed		General Ed		All Teachers		School Psychologists	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>
Research-Based Curricula	49	1.4	43	1.4	92	1.4	35	1.3
Benchmarking/Screening	50	1.3	42	1.4	92	1.3	38	1.3
School-wide data on behavior	49	1.4	44	1.6	93	1.5	31	1.5
“Data Team”	47	1.3	42	1.5	89	1.4	33	1.5
Grade-level team meetings	50	1.3	42	1.5	92	1.4	35	1.4
Tiers/groups	47	1.3	40	1.4	87	1.4	34	1.4
Skills testing	49	1.5	44	1.6	93	1.5	33	1.3
Consultation	51	1.6	44	1.6	95	1.6	37	1.5
Progress-monitoring	51	1.3	44	1.5	95	1.4	38	1.5
Decision-making based on data	51	1.4	43	1.5	94	1.4	38	1.5
Sped eligibility based on RTI	51	1.4	44	1.5	95	1.4	32	1.3

¹Response options were *more*, *less*, *same*, and *not used by my school*.

Special and general education teachers’ ratings were compared with regard to their desire to have school psychologists involved the same, less, or more in the 11 identified RTI components. No significant differences were evident between the teacher groups. Similarly, when comparing school psychologists’ level of desired involvement to that of teachers’ (combined) overall desire, no significant differences were found.

Participant Feedback

For a compilation of all participant comments, see Appendix J. A few patterns are evident in the comments. A number of teachers expressed considerable satisfaction with their school psychologists, particularly special education teachers. Several teachers also expressed that they had had limited interaction with their school psychologists, or were without one this

year. General education teachers tended to make such observations. School psychologists reported quite varied levels of involvement in RTI components in their buildings.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Relationship between Teachers and School Psychologists

Involvement

Teachers' responses to items regarding school psychologists' involvement with staff indicate school psychologists have met most of the teachers with whom they work, and worked with many of them on referrals and interventions. Because of the history of school psychologists' job roles and because over 40% of psychologists reported spending more than half their time on assessment-related activities, it is not surprising that special education referrals were the primary way in which teachers had contact with their school psychologist. From the standpoint of assisting students, it is encouraging that working together on an intervention for a student had occurred for two-thirds of teachers. Data showing a greater percentage of special education teachers than regular education teachers have met and worked with their school psychologist in varying capacities is consistent with previous research showing that special education teachers tend to work more closely with school psychologists than general education teachers (Gilman & Medway, 2007).

The only significant difference found between general and special education teachers' responses was in terms of school psychologists explaining their job role. About twice as many special education teachers indicated this had happened. Because special education teachers work more frequently with school psychologists, there are more opportunities to divide responsibilities with special education teachers and to clarify what school psychologists do in their job role. Thus, because historically school psychologists have worked less frequently with general

education teachers, it may be beneficial for school psychologists to ensure that general education teachers are familiar with a school psychologist's job role. Doing so may help build positive, productive relationships leading to more effective prevention and intervention for students. Both these data, and the fact that with RTI procedures interactions should increase between these two professional groups, suggests the need for clarifying the school psychologist's role with general education teachers. No significant difference was observed between special and general education teachers in terms of working with school psychologists on interventions or special education evaluations. This finding may reflect the aforementioned trend of integrating preventative practices in the regular classroom. This approach enables school psychologists to have a more visible role in the general education setting. Although special education teachers remain a consistent partner in special education evaluations, general education teachers may be taking a more prominent role in implementing interventions.

Job Understanding

School psychologists rated themselves as significantly more knowledgeable of teachers' job roles and the limits of the classroom environment when making recommendations than teachers thought they were. This difference could indicate a potential area for conflict. When working with teachers on child study teams, evaluation teams, or in consultation, school psychologists need to make recommendations that teachers view as useful and viable in the classroom setting. These results may suggest that school psychologists are not taking teachers' responsibilities and the limits of the classroom environment into as much consideration as teachers think they should. Lack of consideration of these factors, or a perceived lack of consideration of these factors, may negatively affect teachers' willingness to follow through with recommendations and hinder future interactions. Borghese and Cole (1984) had two key results

in their survey of teachers and school psychologists regarding school psychologists' recommendations that coincide with the findings of the current study. Recommendations that were vague, general, or unrealistic for the classroom were not considered helpful by 40% of teachers, and 48% of the teachers felt they had a minimal role in developing recommendations in consultation with the school psychologist. If school psychologists would consult and collaborate with teachers when designing intervention plans prior to finalizing recommendations, this approach might avoid such problems. Ensuring that teachers agree with the appropriateness of the recommendations may increase the fidelity of implementation and thus, improve services to students.

Another important result from the current study was school psychologists' perception that they understand teachers' job roles better than teachers understand school psychologists' job role. Essentially, teachers and school psychologists are both reporting that the other professional only has a moderate understanding of what their job involves. This finding, in combination with the fact that only one third of general education teachers and two thirds of special education teachers felt their school psychologist had clearly explained his or her job role, may result in miscommunication and inappropriate expectations on both fronts. As noted previously, school psychologists would do well to explain their job role to teachers, especially those in general education.

School Psychologists' Helpfulness

Because students are the primary target for educational services, it was encouraging to see that teachers indicated that the groups for which school psychology services were most helpful were students and teachers. In terms of the shift to RTI and the focus on prevention of student difficulty, increasing the helpfulness of services to other teachers and families is also

important. These adults have the ability to positively affect students prior to a special education referral. Teachers' overall ratings of school psychologists' helpfulness hovered between *neither helpful nor unhelpful* and *helpful*, indicating room for improvement in helping students, teachers, and families. Aiming to be helpful in every domain of the profession of school psychology is probably unrealistic. However, to be seen as helpful to key stakeholders is essential in times of budget tightening and streamlining in today's schools, as well as in building and preserving good relationships with teachers to obtain better outcomes for students.

Presence of Personal Characteristics

Data from teachers' descriptions of the personal characteristics of their school psychologists indicated that Michigan school psychologists demonstrate many important personal characteristics. This is consistent with previous research showing that school psychologists are generally displaying positive personal characteristics (e.g., approachability, availability; Moon, 2008). Teachers generally agreed that psychologists were approachable and easy to talk to. However, agreement across teachers on the different characteristics varied.

The lower ratings of some of the personal characteristics may indicate areas where school psychologists' perceived behaviors could negatively impact their ability to be effective in the school setting. The personal characteristic that incurred the highest frequency of *disagree* ratings was *proactive in offering services* (17.9%). School psychologists who volunteer their assistance to teachers are considered more effective (Stenger et al., 1992). Thus, the current ratings suggest that some school psychologists in this study are not proactive in this regard. These ratings coincide with higher disagreement ratings for being *available when teachers need help* (13.7%). If school psychologists are not proactive in offering help and not available when teachers need

help, it will be difficult to assist students in a timely fashion and build positive relationships with teachers.

The item *on good terms with most teachers* was added to the survey to obtain an overall measure of how well school psychologists are thought to be interacting with teachers. Just over half (54.5%) of general education teachers thought their school psychologists got along well with most teachers in the building. This seems inconsistent with other results for personal characteristics for school psychologists that indicated school psychologists are approachable and easy to talk to. Perhaps being pleasant is insufficient for being on good terms with teachers, particularly if understanding of the school psychologist's responsibilities is not clear or services are not perceived as helpful.

Importance of Personal Characteristics

The differences between general education teachers and special education teachers in their ranking of the most important personal characteristics of a school psychologist may reflect the nature of the relationships school psychologists have had with these two groups over the years. General education teachers traditionally interacted less often with school psychologists. A general education teacher may need assistance from the school psychologist only a few times a year. However, when those situations arise, general education teachers want a school psychologist who can be there when needed. Following that availability, it is important that the school psychologist is supportive of the general education teacher's needs, and is easy to approach about those situations.

In contrast, special education teachers typically have more regular interaction with school psychologists. In that sense, having a school psychologist who is easy to approach to discuss various special education students and their needs would be a high priority. Similarly, when

working closely with a school psychologist it is important that the psychologist have good follow-through with his or her responsibilities in terms of evaluations and interventions for special education students, and be willing to get involved to help make necessary changes.

Due to the many landscape changes in school psychologists' responsibilities with the implementation of RTI, it is not surprising school psychologists reported having good follow-through as a top personal characteristic for an effective school psychologist. Good follow-through is important in building trust in professional relationships and in implementing effective practices for students. The myriad of components to RTI and other programs are not helpful without good follow-through. School psychologists rated this responsibility above more interpersonal skills such as building rapport and being easy to talk to. Perhaps this indicates somewhat of a priority for job completion over relationship building with staff members. Although, the ratings indicate that school psychologists find both areas important for effective school psychology practice. These findings are similar to teacher reports from Knoff et al.'s (1995) study showing that teachers want a school psychologist with a balance between professional and interpersonal skills.

Results from this study were somewhat different than Knoff et al.'s (1995) results indicating that teachers found *establishing rapport, displaying interest, and being willing to get involved* as priorities. Rapport-building and willingness to get involved appeared in school psychologists' and special education teachers' priority lists, but they were not at the top. Some differences in priority may be due to shifts in teacher expectations for school psychologists over the last 18 years. Also, Knoff et al. focused on the consultative relationship between teachers and school psychologists, whereas the current study referred to interactions in general between these two groups. Within a consultant-consultee relationship the characteristics identified by

Knoff et al. may take precedence, but in daily interaction teachers may have other personal characteristics they perceive as necessary for effective school psychology practice.

Presence of Job-Related Competencies

Teachers and school psychologists agreed that school psychologists most often give good recommendations regarding psychological test results, which is consistent with the traditional school psychologist assessment role. What is somewhat concerning is both teacher groups reported that *managing classroom behavior* was the area they felt least confident about in terms of school psychologists' recommendations. Managing classroom behavior is a major concern in many schools and a school psychologist should be competent in providing effective suggestions to help in this area (NASP, 2010). Perhaps the reason why teachers reported this area as weakest for good recommendations is related to their perception of school psychologists' understanding of the limits of their classrooms. A school psychologist may suggest a potentially effective recommendation, but if that plan does not take into account the teacher's other responsibilities as well as other classroom variables that may affect the teacher's implementation fidelity, the teacher may fail to implement the intervention. Or, the teacher may implement the recommendation and then when it does not work, feel that the school psychologist failed to understand some of the variables involved.

School psychologists' ratings of their competency in providing recommendations in areas outlined as key job competencies by NASP were significantly higher than teachers' perceptions of the helpfulness of these recommendations. Overall, school psychologists reported being able to give better recommendations than teachers felt they had received. This is a problem, because all areas of school psychologists' job competencies received significantly lower ratings from both groups of teachers, except the areas of *psychological tests*, *needs of diverse students*, and

crisis intervention for special education teachers. Michigan school psychologists and teachers appear to view the quality of school psychologists' recommendations differently, which is potentially troubling for school psychologists.

This difference may be due to several factors. First, school psychologists know they need to be competent in these areas. They are trained in these areas in graduate school, and continue to be exposed to this information in school psychology journals and conference presentations. Knowing that competency in these areas is expected, the school psychologists may have unintentionally inflated their ratings of their ability to provide good recommendations to teachers. Each school psychologist is likely to have areas of strength, where they are able to provide helpful recommendations to teachers, as well as areas where they need further training in order to make more useful recommendations. In essence, school psychologists may have inflated their ratings of their competence in making recommendations because they understand how important these skills are for their profession.

Another possible variable may be related to previous results showing that school psychologists perceived their understanding of teachers' jobs and the limits of the classroom setting as greater than what teachers perceived school psychologists' understanding to be. The nature of the teacher's job and classroom-specific variables may render some recommendations more helpful for some teachers than for others. If school psychologists do not communicate to teachers a good comprehension of teachers' responsibilities and limitations of the classroom setting, this could contribute to teachers feeling that the recommendations they receive from psychologists are not realistic.

Again, increased efforts to consult and collaborate with teachers in developing intervention plans prior to finalizing recommendations may be helpful here. Also as follow-up,

school psychologists could ask teachers which recommendations they found particularly helpful, which were not helpful, and their rationale for these decisions. Teachers are likely to have individual preferences for recommendations as well as how they prefer recommendations be described. Seeking this information would provide school psychologists with data about teachers' individual preferences as well as the effectiveness of their recommendations in general. If time for such conversations is limited, a brief social validity questionnaire might be attached to a report asking the teacher to indicate which recommendation was most useful and which were the least useful and why.

Both teachers and school psychologists gave low ratings to school psychologist's recommendations in the area of *crisis intervention*. This result may suggest that school psychology training programs are not giving enough attention to this skill area. Increased conference presentations and publications in crisis intervention may help in developing school psychologists' ability to address needs in this area.

Teachers' Job Roles

Few significant differences were found between special and general education teachers regarding to their perceptions of school psychologists' personal characteristics and job-related competencies. School psychologists were perceived to be equally helpful by both teacher groups, suggesting a comparable level of impact across classrooms. In this sense, school psychologists are doing well by seemingly having a balanced impact in both general and special education settings. This is in contrast to the results of Gilman and Medway's (2007) study that found a significant difference between general and special education teachers' perceptions regarding school psychology services to teachers. In that study, general education teachers rated school psychologists as less helpful and reported lower overall satisfaction with school psychology

services. Possibly recent changes such as the implementation of RTI are beginning to bridge a gap between school psychologists and the general education population, increasing the exposure of general education teachers to a greater variety of school psychology services.

However, general and special education teachers have different expectations as to the personal characteristics of effective school psychologists as shown in their rankings of key personal characteristics that contribute to effectiveness. A degree of variability was also present between general and special education teachers' ratings of the helpfulness of school psychologists' recommendations in 3 of the 9 areas of job-related competency. These differences suggest that school psychologists need to be aware that general and special education teachers share many of the same feelings regarding the quality of services they are receiving, but may have different expectations for school psychologists because of differing needs for the general vs. special education classroom environment.

Response to Intervention

Use of RTI Components

Reports of the use of RTI components varied across the three groups of participants. Results suggest that each group defines RTI components differently, has different levels of knowledge regarding the components, or both. School psychologists reported implementation of fewer RTI components than teachers did. School psychologists may have higher criteria in terms of what implementation of each RTI practice entails. Or perhaps because school psychologists often are not in a building as consistently as teachers, they may be less aware of the practices used, particularly if the school psychologist is engaged in a more traditional testing role.

Regardless of the reasons for these differences, it is apparent that many elementary schools are employing at least some, if not many, of the key RTI components identified by Tilly (2008). Thus it seems there are changes in the way elementary schools in Michigan are trying to meet student needs. Both teachers and school psychologists are aware that these components are becoming part of their routine practice.

Current School Psychologist Involvement in RTI

Despite several differences between teachers and school psychologists in reports of RTI component use, general and special education teachers appear to be aware of what RTI components their school psychologists are involved in implementing. To some extent this finding contrasts with previous reports that teachers feel they do not always understand the school psychologist's job role (Pohlman et al., 1998), and results from the current study suggesting that school psychologists feel teachers have only a moderate understanding of school psychologists' responsibilities. Perhaps increased interaction with all teachers through RTI and related programs has enhanced teachers' knowledge about what school psychologists do in general, although they may not understand the specific responsibilities involved.

The areas of greatest disparity between teacher ratings of school psychologists' participation in RTI and school psychologists' ratings of their own participation may reflect differences of understanding in what certain RTI components involve. For example, school psychology training programs typically emphasize the science of psychology with an emphasis on data-based decision-making, research design, statistics, and the process of carrying out research. Teacher training programs typically do not emphasize these areas. Thus, school psychologists' definitions of what constitutes research and research-based decision making are likely to be different than teachers' definitions because they do not receive as much training in

research. In this study the greatest differences were found between teachers and school psychologists in the area of *decision-making based on data*. Further, the definition of participation may vary for these components. School psychologists may be involved in data collection or grade-level teams during the few times of the school year when benchmarking data are gathered, which requires school- and class-wide analysis of information. School psychologists may consider this participation seasonal. However, if these teams meet more frequently to review student information without the school psychologist, teachers may not consider the school psychologist a regular participant in this component of RTI.

School psychologists' rate of involvement in RTI components was lower than the reported rates of implementation of those RTI components. Although school psychologists have training in RTI practices, and skills to aid in their implementation and follow-up, they are still responsible for most special education assessments. A large percentage of school psychologists (42%) reported spending more than 60% of their time on assessment-related activities. Due to the necessity of complying with state laws and regulations, assessment often takes precedence even if RTI involvement is listed in the school psychologist's job description. Thus, it is impossible for school psychologists to be involved in every RTI-related activity that could use their skill set.

Desired School Psychologist Involvement in RTI

The results of this survey suggest that teachers and school psychologists have similar views regarding the direction of school psychologists' involvement in RTI. Overwhelmingly, both teachers and school psychologists were either satisfied with the current level of school psychologist participation in RTI practices, or they wanted more involvement. In particular, *skills testing, interventions, and special education eligibility based on RTI* were areas where

everyone reported wanting the same or more school psychologist involvement. Although school psychologists are trained in all areas impacted by RTI practices, these particular areas are most closely related to school psychologists' training.

School psychologists are in a good position to increase their involvement in RTI components in areas that are natural extensions of school psychologists' typical activities. This is important not only because schools are continually seeking to adapt RTI practices, but also because the current economic climate makes it imperative that school psychologists continue to advertise how and where their skills are important in these initiatives. Because of the key relationship teachers and school psychologists have with implementing effective practices for students, it is important that teachers perceive school psychologists as valuable members of the team in addressing student needs.

Return Rate

Despite following Dillman's (2007) procedures, the overall response rate of 42% for the individual surveys was less than Dillman's expected return rate of 67%. This individual response rate is lower than similar surveys, such as Knoff et al. (1995) with a 54% usable return rate for a teacher survey, and Moon (2008) with a 60% useable return rate for a survey of school psychologists. However, the response rate for schools for which at least one survey was returned was 59%, which is closer to Dillman's expected rate and also the response rates of other studies. A number of factors may explain the difference in response rate for individual participants in the current study and why this rate fell short of Dillman's projected response rate.

First, using elementary school principals as intermediaries for survey distribution was chosen to minimize the impact of staffing changes that would not translate to posted contact information on the Internet. An additional benefit of this approach was protecting potential

participants by not collecting identifying information for mailing purposes. It was hoped the principal's role as an administrator would encourage participation. However, there may have been situations where negative relationships between administration and staff members may have had the opposite effect, reducing participation in the study. Five principals declined to participate in response to the initial mailing. They may represent principals who decided participation in the survey would not be the best use of their staff members' time. Another risk of using the principals as an intermediary was a possible loss of questionnaires in transition between professionals.

Second, six principals or other staff members contacted the primary researcher indicating that their school did not have access to a school psychologist, either because the school contracted for psychological services, the school psychologist was only available when a student needed an assessment for determining special education eligibility, or because that position was vacant. These situations contributed to the lower school psychologist response rate compared to that of the teacher groups. Principals of schools with no school psychologist may have declined to participate because they thought their teachers would not have had the necessary information.

Third, the schedules of potential participants may have interfered with completion of the questionnaire. Teachers and school psychologists are often working a full day with little to no downtime, making completion of the survey less of a priority despite incentives.

Limitations

A number of limitations to the current study should be considered. First, the survey form for this study was not evaluated for reliability. Thus it is unknown whether these results would hold up over time. However, the items were developed based on previous research and information from key education and/or psychology organizations.

Although 59% of schools contacted participated, and nearly 40% of individual surveys were usable, a higher rate of participation would be desirable. Future surveys of teachers and/or school psychologists may use alternate methods for collecting data (e.g., sending questionnaires directly to participants) that might result in better return rates.

School psychologists' ratings of their own efficacy in job-related competencies introduces possible error. School psychologists are aware of the need for useful recommendations, and in some cases may have inflated ratings of their competence in providing recommendations for some areas. This issue should be considered for items asking school psychologists to rate their ability to provide helpful recommendations and the results should be interpreted with that in mind.

A final limitation pertains to the generalizability of the results of this study. Only Michigan elementary schools were targeted. Thus, results of the current study reflect only the relationship between Michigan elementary-school teachers and school psychologists. Michigan secondary level teachers may have different reports regarding the strengths and difficulties of the school psychologists with whom they work. However, the sample of participants for this study had background characteristics similar to those of Michigan teachers and the background characteristics of the school psychologists also were similar to those described by NASP for school psychologists nationally. Data for teachers and school psychologists from other states, however, may yield different results as a function of their state's requirements and the degree of involvement in RTI procedures.

Further research is warranted particularly in terms of how teachers perceive school psychologists' recommendations, and ways in which recommendations could be more useful and acceptable to teachers, particularly with the advent of RTI and other intervention-intense

educational practices. Examinations of recommendations that general education teachers versus special education teachers prefer could be beneficial in improving the practice of school psychology.

Implications for School Psychologists

In general school psychologists are viewed as helpful and caring professionals in the school setting by both general and special education teachers. They are, in many cases, effective in supporting teachers, students, and families. However, ratings by general and special education teachers highlighted areas where there is room for improvement.

First and foremost, school psychologists can improve service impact by ensuring that their recommendations are helpful to teachers and by taking steps to learn about teachers' responsibilities. Displaying understanding of teachers' responsibilities and classroom settings could be accomplished a number of ways: using a brief helpfulness rating scale with teachers to evaluate recommendations, scheduling time with teachers to discuss recommendations prior to writing a report or holding an IEP, observing in teachers' classrooms to gain understanding of the dynamics at play, gathering information from teachers about the strengths and difficulties they have within their classrooms, or attending teacher meetings to learn about their job responsibilities. Creating opportunities for teachers to provide specific feedback to school psychologists about their recommendations and arranging opportunities for teachers to educate school psychologists about their job responsibilities and classroom situations could be beneficial in building stronger, more effective relationships with teachers. It would also be helpful for school psychologists to seek out professional development in crisis intervention to assist in improving the quality of recommendations made in this area.

The shift toward more school psychologist involvement in the general education setting increases the importance of school psychologists being aware of the differences in needs between general and special education teachers. Despite the recent blurring of lines between general and special education services, the primary responsibilities of general and special education teachers remain consistent and affect which personal characteristics these two professional groups view as important for effective school psychology practice. Results of the current study suggested that general education teachers favor a school psychologist who is available when needed, supportive, and approachable, whereas special education teachers want an approachable, dependable, and involved school psychologist. School psychologists may need to alter their own perspectives of what personal characteristics are important to improve their effectiveness.

School psychologists appear to be doing well in establishing themselves in RTI components in their buildings. Teachers and school psychologists alike are satisfied with school psychologist support in these areas thus far, and in several instances are looking for more involvement. School psychologists should continue to find ways to put their background in research, skills in data analysis, systems change, and intervention to use. The advent of RTI practices provides an opening for school psychologists to expand their horizons beyond testing students for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education services. Results of this study suggest that many teachers would welcome school psychologists sharing their knowledge in other areas. Offering support with specific RTI practices can help others recognize the contribution of school psychologists in improving services in an economic climate where it is becoming more important to do so.

In all areas, school psychologists need to be clear about how they can help teachers and other key stakeholders in their buildings. They can ask teachers what needs to be done to make their classrooms or schools run more effectively, or what would be the most helpful to them when – or before – trouble arises. School psychologists should seek to educate other professionals about what school psychologists do and how they can be used to support students, teachers, and families. Because school psychologists are so widely trained in skills valuable to effecting positive change for individuals and systems, they can and should be seeking ways to use those skills whenever and wherever they can.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRE-NOTICE LETTER

Dear Colleague,

October 13, 2012

My name is Megan Hassevoort. I am a doctoral student in the School Psychology program at Central Michigan University. I am conducting a survey on the perception of school psychology services from the perspective of teachers and school psychologists. This study will fulfill the dissertation requirement for a Ph.D. as part of my program.

In the next two weeks, you will receive a set of questionnaires, one for a general education teacher, one for a special education teacher, and one for the school psychologist. The questionnaires address interpersonal and job-related qualities of the school psychologist that may affect his or her relationship with teachers, as well as questions on your building's transition to RTI and your school psychologist's involvement in those changes.

My study aims to gain information about how Michigan teachers and school psychologists are connecting in the workplace. Part of the success from teachers and school psychologists working together lies in the school psychologist's ability to use good interpersonal skills, understand the needs and responsibilities of teachers, as well as provide helpful information to teachers when they need it. The relationship between teachers and school psychologists is becoming more critical as schools move toward incorporating more Response to Intervention components. This change in many schools has increased the amount of time teachers and school psychologists work together.

I will mail the surveys with pre-stamped envelopes for their return. Neither your name or the names of your teachers or school psychologist will appear on the questionnaires. If you do not want to participate, please let me know via e-mail (klein2mm@cmich.edu) and I will remove your school from my mailing list.

My research advisor is Dr. Sharon Bradley-Johnson, who may be contacted at johns1sb@cmich.edu. If you have questions about the project, you may contact me at klein2mm@cmich.edu, or at (616) 403-1438.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and your support.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University
klein2mm@cmich.edu



Teachers' Perceptions of School Psychology Services

Instructions: The following survey asks you to evaluate different qualities of your school psychologist, as well as provide your knowledge and opinion regarding Response to Intervention (RTI) practices and your school psychologist's involvement in them. Please mark a choice for each item.

APPENDIX B

TEACHERS' SURVEY



Please return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

Megan Hassevoort, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate

Central Michigan University Department of Psychology
Sloan Hall 101
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859

Part 4, continued

Mark more, less, same, or not used by my school for the following:

I THINK MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING RTI COMPONENTS:

	More	Less	Same	Not Used By My School
Selecting research-supported curricula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Benchmarking/universal screening in reading, math, and/or writing (e.g., DIBELS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analyzing school-wide data on behavior (e.g., office referrals)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is on a "data team" that reviews benchmarking information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attends grade-level team meetings to review data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dividing students into tiers or groups based on risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consultation regarding research-based interventions for learning and/or behavior concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collecting and/or analyzing progress monitoring for at-risk students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision-making based on data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determines special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 5: Background information

Are you a:

- General education teacher
- Kindergarten
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth
- Sixth

What grade(s) do you teach now?

What is your highest degree:

- Bachelors degree
- Bachelors degree +
- Masters degree
- Masters degree +
- Ph.D./Ed.D.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

How many years have you been teaching?

This is my first year

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21+

What is your age?

- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- 51 to 60
- 61+

Have you had training specifically in RTI? (e.g., coursework, inservice, etc.)

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your assistance! Please feel free to add any comments for the investigator below:

Start Here Part 1: Basic information
Mark yes or no for the following:

MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST HAS!	Yes	No
Met me	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visited my classroom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked with me on a special education referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked with me on an intervention for a student in the general education or special education setting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly explained his/her job role to me	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2: Qualities of my school psychologist

Rate the PRESENCE of the following qualities on a scale of 1 (disagree) to 3 (agree). Choose the three qualities you think are MOST IMPORTANT and rank them from 1 (most important of the three) to 3 (least important of the three) where applicable.

Personal qualities	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Importance
				Choose 3 and rank.
Approachable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Easy to contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Available when I need help	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Supportive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Easy to talk to	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Good at follow-through	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Willing to get involved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Good at displaying interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Effective at building rapport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
On good terms with most teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Proactive in offering services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___

MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST PROVIDES HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN CONSULTED ABOUT!

Job-related competencies	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Importance
				Choose 3 and rank.
Learning problems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Behavior problems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Emotional development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Managing classroom behavior	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Psychological tests	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
The needs of diverse students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Working with families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Crisis intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___
Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	___

MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST UNDERSTANDS!

Job-related competencies	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
The responsibilities of my job	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limits of the classroom when making recommendations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST PROVIDES SERVICES THAT ARE HELPFUL TO!

Job-related competencies	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Me	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Response to Intervention (RTI)

Mark yes, no, or do not know for the following:

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, MY SCHOOL CURRENTLY USES THE FOLLOWING RTI COMPONENTS SCHOOL-WIDE:

	Yes	No	Do Not Know
Research-supported curricula	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benchmarking/universal screening in reading, math, and/or writing (e.g., DIBELS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting school-wide data on behavior (e.g., office referrals)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Data team" that reviews benchmarking information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade-level team meetings to review data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dividing students into tiers or groups based on risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research-based interventions for learning and/or behavior concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Progress monitoring for at-risk students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision-making based on data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 4: School psychologist's role in RTI

Mark yes, no, do not know, or not used by my school for the following:

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, MY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST PARTICIPATES IN THE FOLLOWING RTI COMPONENTS:

	Yes	No	Do Not Know	Not Used By My School
Selecting research-supported curricula	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benchmarking/universal screening in reading, math, and/or writing (e.g., DIBELS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analyzing school-wide data on behavior (e.g., office referrals)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is on a "data team" that reviews benchmarking information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attends grade-level team meetings to review data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dividing students into tiers or groups based on risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation regarding research-based interventions for learning and/or behavior concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting and/or analyzing progress monitoring for at-risk students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision-making based on data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determines special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 4 continued on back →



School Psychologists' Perceptions of Their Services

Instructions: The following survey asks you to evaluate different aspects of your competence and experience working with teachers, as well as provide your opinion regarding your involvement in Response to Intervention (RTI) practices. Please respond to each item.



Please return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

Megan Hassevoort, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate

Central Michigan University Department of Psychology
Sloan Hall 101
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859

Part 4: Background information

How many years have you been working as a school psychologist?
 This is my first year
 1 to 5
 6 to 10
 11 to 15
 16 to 20
 21+

What is your highest degree?
 Masters degree
 Specialist
 Ph.D. or Ed.D.

What is your age?
 21 to 30
 31 to 40
 41 to 50
 51 to 60
 61+

What is your gender?
 Male
 Female
 Prefer not to answer

Circle approximately what percent of your time is spent on special education assessment tasks versus RTI tasks:

Assessment:	RTI:
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-20%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-20%
<input type="checkbox"/> 21-40%	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-40%
<input type="checkbox"/> 41-60%	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-60%
<input type="checkbox"/> 61-80%	<input type="checkbox"/> 61-80%
<input type="checkbox"/> 81-100%	<input type="checkbox"/> 81-100%

Have you had training specifically in RTI? (e.g., coursework, inservice, etc.)
 Yes
 No

Thank you for your assistance! Please feel free to add any comments for the investigator below:

Start Here

Part 1: Job-related competencies

Rate the PRESENCE of the following competencies on a scale of 1 (disagree) to 3 (agree).
Rate the IMPORTANCE of your competencies on a scale of 1 (not important) to 3 (important).

I FEEL COMPETENT TO PROVIDE HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING...

Job-related competencies	Presence			Importance		
	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Not important	Somewhat important	Important
Learning problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Behavior problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing classroom behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Psychological tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The needs of diverse students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crisis intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I UNDERSTAND...

Job-related competencies	Presence			Importance		
	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Not important	Somewhat important	Important
The responsibilities of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limits of the classroom when making recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

TEACHERS AT MY SCHOOL UNDERSTAND...

Job-related competencies	Presence			Importance		
	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Not important	Somewhat important	Important
The responsibilities of my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Choose the three personal qualities you believe are most important in a school psychologist and rank them from 1 (most important of the three) to 3 (least important of the 3)

Personal qualities	Importance Choose 3 and rank.		
Approachable	_____	_____	_____
Easy to contact	_____	_____	_____
Available when teachers need help	_____	_____	_____
Supportive	_____	_____	_____
Easy to talk to	_____	_____	_____
Good at follow-through	_____	_____	_____
Willing to get involved	_____	_____	_____
Good at displaying interest	_____	_____	_____
Effective at building rapport	_____	_____	_____
On good terms with most teachers	_____	_____	_____
Proactive in offering services	_____	_____	_____

Part 2: Response to Intervention (RTI)

Mark the RTI components used in your SCHOOL.
Mark / participate in providing to indicate YOUR involvement in this school's RTI model.

IN THE SCHOOL OF THE PRINCIPAL WHO GAVE ME THIS FORM, THE FOLLOWING RTI COMPONENTS ARE USED SCHOOL-WIDE:

	School Uses		You participate in the RTI model by providing
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research-supported curricula	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benchmarking/universal screening in reading, math, and/or writing (e.g., DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School-wide data on behavior (e.g., office referrals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Data team" that reviews benchmarking information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade-level team meetings to review data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dividing students into tiers or groups based on risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research-based interventions for learning and/or behavior concerns prior to referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Progress monitoring for at-risk students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision-making based on data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Your involvement in RTI

Mark more, less, same, or not used by my school for the following:

I THINK I SHOULD TO BE INVOLVED IN PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING RTI COMPONENTS:

	More			Less			Same			Not Used By My School
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Selecting research-supported curricula	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Benchmarking/universal screening in reading, math, and/or writing (e.g., DIBELS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Analyzing school-wide data on behavior (e.g., office referrals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Being on a "data team" that reviews benchmarking information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attending grade-level team meetings to review data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dividing students into tiers or groups based on risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skills testing to identify students' specific areas for intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation regarding research-based interventions for learning and/or behavior concerns prior to referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Collecting and/or analyzing progress monitoring for at-risk students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Decision-making based on data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Determining special education eligibility based on response to research-based intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued on back →

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPALS' COVER LETTER

Dear Colleague,

October 22, 2012

My name is Megan Hassevoort. I am a doctoral student in the School Psychology program at Central Michigan University. I am conducting a survey on the perception of school psychology services from the perspective of teachers and school psychologists. This study will fulfill the dissertation requirement for a Ph.D. as part of my program.

I am writing to ask for your help in a survey of the relationship between teachers and school psychologists. The quality of school psychological services can have a large impact on how effective teachers and school psychologists are in their job roles, and it can affect the value of services provided to students. Results of this survey will help answer important questions about how school psychologists are perceived by teachers both in terms of interpersonal skills and job-related skills, teachers' perspective of school psychologists' involvement in RTI-related components, as well as school psychologists' view of their competency in providing a variety of services.

Enclosed are three surveys that I ask you distribute to the following professionals in your school: one to a general education teacher, one to a special education teacher, and one to the school psychologist for your building. You will find an envelope for each participant with everything he or she needs to complete his or her survey. It is possible they may find some of the items mildly difficult to answer if the items are related to difficulties they have encountered with teachers or school psychologists. However, participation in the study poses no known risks of stress greater than those professionals ordinarily encounter in their work.

Participation is voluntary. Your school was randomly selected from all Michigan schools. Obtaining a representative sample is very important for my study; by participating you will help make this happen. To express my appreciation, your staff who return the survey with the enclosed contact card will be entered to win one of two \$50 gift cards. If one of your participants is selected, you will also be given a gift card for your help. Whether you participate or not will not affect your relationship with Central Michigan University. Please retain this letter for future reference.

I will remove your name from my reminder list if all surveys are returned within one week. There are no names or identifiers on the questionnaires. However, the return envelopes are coded so that your staff's position at your school can be checked off when a questionnaire is returned. Upon receipt of a survey, the return envelope, contact card, and survey will be immediately separated. That position will be marked on the mailing list, then the return envelope will be shredded. It will not be possible to link survey responses with the staff member; responses will be completely confidential. The mailing list will be kept in a locked file and destroyed when the study is complete.

If you have any questions, comments, or you would like a copy of the results, you may e-mail me at klein2mm@cmich.edu. I am also happy to provide a list of resources on the topic of relationships between teachers and school psychologists or on resources for RTI. My research advisor is Dr. Sharon Bradley-Johnson, who may be contacted at johns1sb@cmich.edu.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University
klein2mm@cmich.edu

Study Title: Teachers' and school psychologists' perceptions of psychology services

Investigators' Names:

Megan Hassevoort, Doctoral Student in School Psychology, Primary Investigator
Sharon Bradley-Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Advisor

APPENDIX E

TEACHERS' COVER LETTER

Dear Colleague,

October 22, 2012

My name is Megan Hassevoort. I am a doctoral student in the School Psychology program at Central Michigan University. I am conducting a survey on the perception of school psychology services from the perspective of teachers and school psychologists. This study will fulfill the dissertation requirement for a Ph.D. as part of my program.

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of the relationship between teachers and school psychologists. The quality of school psychological services can have a large impact on how effective teachers and school psychologists are in their job roles, and it can affect the value of services provided to students. Results of this survey will help answer important questions about the value of school psychological services from the perspectives of both teachers and school psychologists.

Included with this letter is a survey that asks about your perception of important interpersonal and job-related skills of your school psychologist, and how important you believe those characteristics are in providing effective school psychology services. In addition, your perspective of your school's incorporation of RTI procedures and your school psychologist's involvement in them is addressed. Your responses will be compared to those of school psychologists to provide important knowledge about how school psychologists are portraying their services and meeting the needs of teachers and students.

To participate, please fill out the enclosed survey and return it in the pre-addressed stamped envelope. The questionnaire requires about ten to fifteen minutes to complete. You may find some of the items difficult to answer if they parallel difficult situations you have encountered. However, participation in the study poses no known risks of stress greater than teachers ordinarily encounter in their work.

Participation is voluntary. Your school was randomly selected from all Michigan schools, and your principal identified you as an appropriate person to provide this information. Obtaining a representative sample of teachers is very important for my study; by participating you will help make this happen. To express my appreciation, your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card if you return the enclosed contact card with the survey, whether or not you choose to complete the survey. Two gift card winners will be selected from all who respond. Your participation or nonparticipation will not affect your relationship with Central Michigan University or your school. Please retain this letter for future reference.

If you return the survey within one week, I will remove your principal's name from my reminder list. There are no names or identifiers on the questionnaire itself. However, the return envelope is coded so your position at your school can be checked off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Upon receipt of your survey, the return envelope, contact card, and survey will be immediately separated. You will be marked on the mailing list and entered into

the drawing for the gift certificate. The return envelope will be shredded. It will not be possible to link your survey responses to you; your responses will be completely confidential.

Your return of this completed survey implies your consent for the information provided to be included in my research. If you have any questions, comments, or would like a copy of the results, you may e-mail me at klein2mm@cmich.edu. I am also happy to provide a list of resources on the topic of relationships between teachers and school psychologists or resources on RTI. My research advisor is Dr. Sharon Bradley-Johnson, who may be contacted at johns1sb@cmich.edu.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University
klein2mm@cmich.edu

Study Title: Teachers' and school psychologists' perceptions of psychology services

Investigators' Names:

Megan Hassevoort, Doctoral Student in School Psychology, Primary Investigator
Sharon Bradley-Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Advisor

APPENDIX F

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' COVER LETTER

Dear Colleague,

October 22, 2012

My name is Megan Hassevoort. I am a doctoral student in the School Psychology program at Central Michigan University. I am conducting a survey on the perception of school psychology services from the perspective of teachers and school psychologists. This study will fulfill the dissertation requirement for a Ph.D. as part of my program

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of the relationship between teachers and school psychologists. The quality of school psychological services can have a large impact on how effective teachers and school psychologists are in their job roles, and it can affect the value of services provided to students. Results of this survey will help answer important questions about the value of school psychological services from the perspectives of both teachers and school psychologists.

Included with this letter is a survey that asks about your perception of your competence to provide helpful recommendations in a number of areas common in school psychology practice. In addition, your perspective of your school's incorporation of RTI procedures and your involvement in them is addressed. Your responses will be compared to those of both general and special education teachers to provide important knowledge about how school psychologists are portraying their services and meeting the needs of teachers and students.

To participate, please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to me in the pre-addressed stamped envelope. The questionnaire requires about five minutes to complete. It is possible you may find some of the items difficult to answer if they parallel difficult situations you have encountered. However, participation in the study poses no known risks of stress greater than school psychologists ordinarily encounter in their work.

Participation is voluntary. Your school was randomly selected from all Michigan schools, and your principal identified you as an appropriate person to provide this information. Obtaining a representative sample of school psychologists is very important for my study; by participating you will help make this happen. To express my appreciation, your name will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card if you return the enclosed contact card with the survey, whether or not you choose to complete the survey. Two gift card winners will be selected from all who respond. Your participation or nonparticipation will not affect your relationship with Central Michigan University or your school. Please retain this letter for future reference.

If you return the survey within one week, I will remove your principal's name from my reminder list. There are no names or identifiers on the questionnaire itself. However, the return envelope is coded so your position at your school can be checked off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Upon receipt of your survey, the return envelope, contact card, and survey will be immediately separated. You will be marked on the mailing list and entered into

the drawing for the gift certificate. The return envelope will be shredded. It will not be possible to link your survey responses to you; your responses will be completely confidential.

Your return of this completed survey implies your consent for the information provided to be included in my research. If you have any questions, comments, or you would like a copy of the results, you may e-mail me at klein2mm@cmich.edu. I am also happy to provide a list of resources on the topic of relationships between teachers and school psychologists or resources on RTI. My research advisor is Dr. Sharon Bradley-Johnson, who may be contacted at johns1sb@cmich.edu.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University
klein2mm@cmich.edu

Study Title: Teachers' and school psychologists' perceptions of psychology services

Investigators' Names:

Megan Hassevoort, Doctoral Student in School Psychology, Primary Investigator
Sharon Bradley-Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Advisor

APPENDIX G

CONTACT INFORMATION CARD

Complete the information below and include it with your survey to be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$50 gift cards to a store of your choice. If you win, you will be contacted via email or phone for the address you would like the card sent to.

Name: _____

School: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Principal's Name: _____

APPENDIX H

FOLLOW-UP POST CARD

November 7, 2012

Approximately two weeks ago, you were sent a packet of surveys to give to one of your general education teachers, one of your special education teachers, and your school psychologists.

If all professionals have sent back their surveys, either complete or incomplete, thank you for participating. If one or more of these individuals has not sent in their survey, but plans to, this is just a note to remind those individuals to please complete the survey and mail it as soon as they are able.

If you did not receive the surveys or they were misplaced, please e-mail me at klein2mm@cmich.edu or call me at (616) 403-1438 and I would be happy to send you what is needed.

Thank you again for your time and support.

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University
klein2mm@cmich.edu

APPENDIX I

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Dear Colleague,

November 12, 2012

About four weeks ago I sent a packet of questionnaires that aimed to answer important questions about how school psychologists are perceived by teachers both in interpersonal skills and job-related skills, teachers' perspective of school psychologists' involvement in RTI-related components, as well as school psychologists' view of their competency in providing a variety of services. This information will be useful to both teachers and school psychologists in learning how to work together more effectively for the benefit of students.

I am writing again because of the importance of your teachers' and school psychologist's participation. Only through the participation of nearly everyone in the sample I can be sure the results are representative of Michigan teachers and school psychologists.

If you did not receive the survey packet, if you were missing one or more surveys (for your general education teacher, special education teacher, or school psychologist) or if they were misplaced, I have enclosed another copy of each survey that has not been completed. If you are choosing to not participate, please let me know at klein2mm@cmich.edu or (616) 403-1438 and I will remove your name from my mailing list.

As a reminder, the return envelopes are coded so that your staff member can be checked off when the questionnaire is returned. Upon receipt of a survey, the return envelope, contact card, and survey will be immediately separated. The position will be marked on the mailing list then the return envelope will be shredded. It will not be possible to link survey responses with the staff member; responses will be completely confidential. The mailing list will be kept in a locked file and destroyed when the study is complete.

I would appreciate it if you would encourage your staff members to complete their surveys and send them back soon.

If you have any questions or comments, you may contact me (klein2mm@cmich.edu) or my supervisor, Dr. Sharon Bradley-Johnson (johns1sb@cmich.edu).

Thank you again for your time and attention. It is only with your help that this research can be successful.

Sincerely,

Megan M. Hassevoort
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Central Michigan University

APPENDIX J

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Special Education Teachers:

“I’m a preschool special education teacher. I service 11 Head Start students, 1 young 5 student, 1 kindergartener, and also run a language group. I am in 4 different buildings and work with 7 gen ed. teachers. My situation is unique! I do work closely with our psychologist.”

“Our school psychologist is contracted for testing only.”

“We have an exceptional working relationship with our school psychologist in our building. She works part-time in our district. She is very involved and knowledgeable.”

“My psych is great. She is a pleasure to work with. She doesn’t think she is better than us, a real member of our special ed., RTI, Tier II team. She also works with individuals and groups.”

“I enjoy working with our school psychs, but their involvement seems primarily centered on special ed. referral and then completing the evals. They do a great job and are so busy, I don’t know that they could do any RTI stuff.”

“We have a new psych who started the end of September. I have only been in 2 meetings with her so far.”

“In addition to a school psychologist we have a literacy consultant who handles several of the RTI components instead of the school psychologist. I am not aware if they consult each other, though.”

“Our school has an outstanding RTI program and an outstanding school psychologist!”

“Our district is currently without a psych so far this year. I am basing my responses on our last psychologist who was excellent. We are currently contracting psychologist services at a detriment to our district. Our last psych was of such value to our team. We need a full-time psych.”

General Education Teachers:

“Good luck on completing your degree!”

“It was hard to answer these. I only met her once and she does not do any of these things that I know of. Not here very often.”

“While I would like to have our psychologist more for consultation, I often do not feel that she fully understands the challenges of teaching a full class of 5 year old children --- her advice (when given) is often unreasonable.”

“Good luck!”

“Our school psychologist is shared throughout the district. Her time in our building is very limited. The RTI items marked reflect the fact that she spends a small amount of time in our building.”

“Our school psychologist is a good person. She is just very hard to work with. Teachers don’t feel like a team when working with her. It’s like a battle!”

“The only time we see the school psychologist is when she comes for testing a child, doing a short in-class observation, and at the IEP.”

School Psychologists:

“These responses are not reflective of the other schools I serve. This is the school that chooses to involve me the least.”

“I spend half of my time in this district (the other half I am in the rest of the county doing 0-5 evals, ISD center-based services, teacher trainings for ASD). Most of my time in this district is spent at this elementary – grades preschool to 4th. We are trying to get more consistent RTI in place as well as progress monitoring, etc. I also am participating in a group to get a behavior team in place, a crisis team, regular team meetings to review and revise behavior plans based on data. Our EI population is increasing and our assistant principal is spending most of her time managing these students’ behaviors. So I spend a lot of time on building-level systems, which I would consider RTI activities. Good luck with your research!”

“We focus on monitoring a students’ response to intervention at all times but continue to use a pattern of strengths and weaknesses model for LD eligibility decisions. I review Swiss data and participate on child study teams to help develop behavioral interventions but it is rather informal. Many of the questions were difficult to answer because we are in the process of implementing RTI but are not fully functional yet.”

“Best of luck in your program! I am a 1986 grad from the CMU school psych program. I find it interesting that Central is offering a Ph.D. level school psych degree. Most school districts do not have a lane for PhD. I am also surprised to see that Sharon Bradley-Johnson is still an active prof – that’s great! Is she still hung up on the use of the word “weaknesses”? Every time I hear someone use the phrase ‘strengths and weaknesses’ I cringe a bit and think of Sharon.”

“Prior to returning to ISD from local ‘ownership,’ I was heavily involved in RTI . I belonged to CST, ran behavioral and academic intervention groups as well as participated in grade-level meetings, and DIBELS assessment, school-wide three times a year. My role as a psychologist was 50% assessment and 50% RTI. Now as an ISD employee, I primarily assess, 80%, and 20% RTI.”

“I have supported this local district for about 6 years in MTSS implementation. My role is beginning to change this year as the district is taking over capacity building efforts to run part of

the MTSS system with little or no support from me (i.e., universal screening). In other areas the staff requires more support (i.e., getting effective grade level meetings going).”

“1.) RTI is a general education initiative. 2) RTI is part of but not the only part of eligibility evaluations. 3) I’m contracted with limited hours so my focus is solely on new assessments.”

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