AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)
2012 Annual Report

TOPSS Committee Members: Jann Longman, MS, Chair; Jeanne Blakeslee, MA, MLE, Past Chair; Steve Jones, MA, Chair-Elect; Michael Hamilton, MA; Tonya Hinton, MA; Michael McLane, MA; Katie Clark, MA; Kenneth Keith, PhD; Janie Wilson, PhD

Staff Liaisons: Emily Leary Chesnes, MBA; Robin Hailstorks, PhD; Caitlin Crowley

In 2012, the APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) worked on several initiatives that were aligned to the APA strategic plan. Many TOPSS programs and initiatives align well to the goal to *Increase Recognition of Psychology as a Science* (Goal 3). Several TOPSS initiatives also align to the APA strategic initiatives, including the initiative to analyze the psychology workforce to meet national needs and the initiative to expand the APA public education campaign.

TOPSS 20th Anniversary

In 2012, TOPSS celebrated its 20th anniversary. In 1992 the TOPSS Interim Steering Committee was formed and in 1993 the TOPSS Committee was officially established by the APA Council of Representatives. The following events and activities took place in 2012 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the TOPSS Committee:

- The TOPSS 20th Anniversary was recognized at the spring 2012 consolidated meetings, with an announcement made by APA President Suzanne Bennett Johnson, PhD, at the opening plenary session and celebratory refreshments for meeting attendees.
- The TOPSS website was updated with a new page celebrating the 20th Anniversary, highlighting "20 Years of TOPSS Accomplishments."
- Articles on the anniversary appeared in the *Psychology Teacher Network* newsletter and APA *Monitor on Psychology* magazine.
- A limited number of TOPSS t-shirts displaying a listing of TOPSS' 20 years of accomplishments were produced for distribution to various TOPSS members, including the 2012 APA/Clark University Workshop attendees and the 2012 APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Award recipients.
- A reception honoring the TOPSS 20th Anniversary took place at the APA Annual Convention in Orlando in August 2012. Approximately 50 people attended the reception.

APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers

The eighth annual APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers was held July 16-18, 2012, at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Twenty-five high school teachers from around the country participated in the workshop. Presenters included Debra Park, MA, of Rutgers University and West Deptford High School (West Deptford, NJ; retired), and Michael Sullivan, MA, of Hopkinton High School (Hopkinton, MA). Presenters also included Nancy Budwig, PhD, and Marianne Wiser, PhD, both of Clark University, and Amy Wolfson, PhD, of the College of the Holy Cross, presenting on scientific learning, sensation and perception, and sleep, respectively. Randolph Smith, PhD, of Lamar University, delivered a keynote address entitled *Though This be Madness, Yet There is Method In't: The Importance of Research Methods in*

Introductory Psychology. The workshop, which is co-sponsored by APA, Clark University, and the American Psychological Foundation (APF), has been made possible through generous gifts to both Clark University and APF from Lee Gurel, PhD, a Clark University alumnus, APA member and longtime APF donor.

National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula

Promoting and disseminating the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* remained a priority in 2012. The purpose of the *National Standards* is to provide guidance for high school psychology teachers and others responsible for development of psychology curriculum at the secondary school level; the document also promotes quality instruction in psychology as a scientific discipline. APA staff continued to disseminate the document in 2012, and TOPSS Committee members pledged to contact their local school districts and state departments of education about the *National Standards* and the *Guidelines for High School Psychology Teachers: Course-Based and Standards-Based Approaches*.

Guidelines for High School Psychology Teachers: Course-Based and Standards-Based Approaches

The *Guidelines for High School Psychology Teachers: Course-Based and Standards-Based Approaches* was approved as APA policy by the APA Council of Representatives in February 2012. Developed by the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) Working Group on the Certification and Training of High School Psychology Teachers, the document provides models for teacher preparation aligned to APA's *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*. The document is available through the APA website and in limited print copies. APA staff began the process of broadly disseminating the document in 2012.

Unit Lesson Plans

The TOPSS unit lesson plans are a signature product of the TOPSS Committee. The unit lesson plans provide guidance for teaching specific content areas in psychology. In 2012, two revised unit plans were published, one on *Biological Bases of Behavior* and one on *Life Span Development.* Funding from the American Psychological Foundation, generously provided through a gift from Lee Gurel, PhD, supported the revision of the TOPSS unit lesson plans in 2012.

TOPSS continued to advise Education Directorate staff on revisions to additional unit lesson plans. Revision of the following unit lesson plans continued: *Perspectives in Psychological Science; Research Methods, Measurement, and Statistics; Vocational Applications; Memory; Personality;* and *Learning*. The TOPSS Committee also continued discussions on plans to develop problem-focused unit lesson plans.

National Survey of High School Psychology Teachers

In early 2012, the Education Directorate, with guidance from the TOPSS Committee, conducted a National Survey of High School Psychology Teachers. The survey, supported by a grant from the American Psychological Foundation, collected information regarding teachers' educational background, preparation and training, and information on resources and opportunities, classroom issues, future trends, and professional development needs. Nearly 1,100 teachers participated in the survey, and an executive summary of results was posted to the TOPSS website in late 2012. This survey supported the APA strategic initiative to analyze the current and future demand for the psychology workforce to meet national needs.

Resource Manual for New Teachers of High School Psychology

In August 2012, the APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee published a *Resource Manual for New Teachers of High School Psychology*. The purpose of this document is to present new teachers with some resources and helpful suggestions from teachers with many years of teaching experience. The resource manual includes information on how to get started, selecting a textbook, organizing the course, lesson planning, activities, ethics, and maintaining teacher health (stress and coping). The manual, which is available through the TOPSS website, also includes resources for teachers, including websites and print materials.

Recognizing High School Teachers and Students of Psychology

TOPSS recognized three outstanding teachers in 2012 with APA TOPSS Excellence in Teaching Awards. Laura Brandt, MA, MS, of Grayslake Central High School (Grayslake, IL), Kimberly Patterson, MS, EdS, of Cypress Bay High School (Weston, FL), and Maria Vita of Penn Manor High School (Millersville, PA) received the 2012 awards.

In 2012, TOPSS recognized high school students and awarded scholarships to those who submitted outstanding essays through the APA TOPSS Essay Competition for High School Students. Rakesh Goli of The Altamont School (Birmingham, AL), Ning Liu of Parkview High School (Lilburn, GA), Rebecca Shaw of Horace Mann School (New York, NY), and Rachael Spillane of Topsail High School (Hampstead, NC) each received $250 scholarships for their winning essays. The 2012 competition asked to describe specific psychological concepts as they relate to the various ways a person might react to a natural disaster.

TOPSS offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2012 so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. Student award recipient names were posted to the TOPSS website.

TOPSS-Sponsored Sessions for High School Teachers

TOPSS and the Education Directorate sponsored sessions at regional and national conferences, including sessions at the Advanced Placement Reading "Professional Speaker Night." TOPSS also sponsored an address delivered by Philip Zimbardo, PhD, titled *Why I am Managing a New Hero Factory in San Francisco,* at the Western Psychological Association (WPA) conference, where TOPSS Chair Jann Longman, MS, also presented on the newly revised *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*. TOPSS Chair-Elect Steve Jones, MA, also presented at the Best Practices Conference in Atlanta, GA in October. TOPSS and the Education Directorate sponsored receptions for high school psychology teachers at the APA Convention (August 2012, Orlando, FL) and the NCSS Conference (November 2012, Seattle, WA).

TOPSS sponsored five programs at the APA Convention in Orlando, FL. The TOPSS Invited Addresses were:

- Derald Wing Sue, PhD, Teachers College, Columbia University (*Microaggressions in the Classroom: Manifestation, Dynamics and Impact)*
- Michele Ybarra, MPH, PhD, Internet Solutions for Kids, Inc. (*Pitfalls and Opportunities for Growing up in the Digital Age*)
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD, Spelman College (*The Lee Gurel Lecture: Connecting the Dots: How Race in America's Classrooms Affects Achievement*).

Two panel discussions were also held, one on *The Hidden Curriculum: Non-Academic Determinants of Academic Success,* featuring Heather Bullock, PhD, University of California,

Santa Cruz; Laura Smith, PhD, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Frank Worrell, University of California Berkeley; and one on *Talking About Race & Ethnicity: Crucial, but Difficult*, featuring Elliot Hammer, PhD, Xavier University of Louisiana; Kimberly Patterson, MS, EdS, Cypress Bay High School, Weston, Fla.; and Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD, Spelman College. Two of these talks, in addition to five other Convention sessions, were videotaped and posted to the APA website for teachers to view, thanks to funding provided by the American Psychological Foundation.

2012 APA Convention Award Program for High School Psychology Teachers and Students

In 2012, the APA Education Directorate and TOPSS Committee sponsored an award program for high school psychology teachers and their students to attend the 2012 APA convention in Orlando, FL. The goal of the program was to bring high school students who had shown a special interest in psychological science to the convention. Six teachers and 21 of their students were selected to participate in the program. This award program was made possible thanks to the generous support of APA President Suzanne Bennett Johnson, PhD.

Membership Outreach and Services

Membership outreach and retention remained a high priority for TOPSS. In 2012, the TOPSS Committee, through support of the Education Directorate, launched its own Facebook fan page, to enhance member engagement and communication. This year, TOPSS also considered ways to make its Regional or State Coordinator Network more effective.

In 2012, the APA Education Directorate participated as an exhibitor at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference in Washington, DC. NCSS is the largest association for social studies educators in the country. The NCSS tabletop booth provided APA and TOPSS with good visibility at NCSS. TOPSS and the Education Directorate sponsored a reception for high school psychology teachers at the conference.

TOPSS communicated with its members through the distribution of a spring mass mailing and a fall e-blast containing announcements and teaching resources. The spring mailing including the newly published APA brochure on *Careers in Psychology*. TOPSS also communicated with affiliate members through postings to the TOPSS Web site and the TOPSS listserv. In 2012, a TOPSS webpage on “Teacher Resources” was revised to be more user-friendly for visitors.

The TOPSS Committee suggested revisions for its webpage on the TOPSS Ethnic Minority Recruiting Project, renaming the suggestions as “Minority Recruitment Recommendations” and adding language to include other aspects of diversity.

The Education Directorate, in collaboration with TOPSS members and members of the APA Committee of Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges, distributed four issues of the *Psychology Teacher Network* (PTN) newsletter. The *PTN* provides teachers with articles, activities, and book reviews to enhance psychology classroom teaching.

American Psychological Foundation/Education Directorate Lee Gurel Fund for the Professional Development of High School Psychology Teachers

The TOPSS Committee greatly appreciated American Psychological Foundation (APF) funding to the Education Directorate in 2012 that supported the following initiatives:

- The revision of unit lesson plans (outlined above)
- Completion of the National Survey for High School Psychology Teachers (outlined above)

- *APF High School Psychology Teacher Network Grants* to support local or regional networks of psychology teachers
- *APF Professional Development Awards for High School Psychology* Teachers to help high school psychology teachers travel to and attend regional or national conferences

Additionally, the APF funding allowed the Education Directorate to post the following videotaped sessions from the 2012 APA Convention online to the TOPSS website for psychology teachers to view:

- David Buss, PhD, on *Why Students Love Evolutionary Psychology . . . and How to Teach It*
- Christine Chiarello, PhD, on *Brain Organization for Language: It's All in the Network(s)*
- Elizabeth Yost Hammer, PhD, on *Meta-studying: Teaching Metacognitive Strategies to Enhance Student Success*
- Kenneth D. Keith, PhD, on *A Letter to Teachers: William James, H. B. Alexander, and Me*
- Daniel L. Schacter, PhD, on *The Seven Sins of Memory: An Update*
- Derald Wing Sue, PhD, on *Microaggressions in the Classroom: Manifestation, Dynamics and Impact*
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, PhD, on *Connecting the Dots: How Race in America's Classrooms Affects Achievement*

Sessions from the 2012 APA/Clark University Workshop were also recorded and will be posted online in early 2013.

<u>Other Collaborations and Discussions</u>

The APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA) invited TOPSS to participate in an award to recognize a high school, community college, undergraduate, or graduate psychology training program that best exemplifies outstanding multicultural training, education and practice. TOPSS appointed a representative to the award working group.

TOPSS continued to invite APA Divisions to develop PowerPoint presentations and other resources (e.g., videos, websites) for teachers. In 2012, one new PowerPoint demonstration was added to the TOPSS website: Behavior Analysis, created by APA Division 25.

A TOPSS liaison attended the June and December 2012 meetings of the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education.

Kay Minter, MA, a former TOPSS chair, submitted a proposal on psychology and APA's *National Standards* that was accepted for the 2013 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Conference.

The TOPSS Committee participated in the Good Governance Project through the APA Consolidated Meetings, and also participated in discussions on the APA public education campaign.