

APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Dana Melone, MAT (chair); Natasha Alston, MPS; Julie Gowans; Kari Hall, MA; Terri Lindenberg, MA; Emily Polacek, MA; Amy Ramponi; Krisztina Jakobsen, PhD; Antonio Puente, PhD

Staff Liaison(s): Emily Leary Chesnes, MBA, and Sue Orsillo, PhD

National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula

In support of the APA strategic plan goals to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*” and “*strengthen APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology*,” the TOPSS Committee focused on broad dissemination of the revised *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*, approved by Council in February 2022. Outreach efforts included the following:

- Promotion in the TOPSS chair’s monthly email to TOPSS members
- *More Choice, More Flexibility: Using APA’s Revised National Standards: An APA TOPSS Webinar*
- Sessions at three summer teaching workshops, at an APA 2022 session, and at the National Council for the Social Studies conference
- An email campaign sent to over 6,200 public school districts across the United States in December 2022
- Focused advocacy efforts in eleven states (i.e., TOPSS identified members interested in leading or contributing to advocacy and invited them to attend a webinar on state-level advocacy efforts)
- An advocacy toolkit posted online that includes the webinar recording, template letters, and talking points for teachers

The standards website received 27% more pageviews in 2022 compared with 2021, recordings of the two webinars posted on YouTube were watched over 600 times in 2022, and 135 teachers attended the webinars. TOPSS members in six of the eleven states contacted their state board or department of education.

Learning Opportunities for High School Psychology Teachers

In support of the APA strategic goals to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*” and “*strengthen APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology*,” another TOPSS priority in 2022 was to promote high-quality psychology education by providing learning opportunities for high school psychology teachers. The following opportunities were held in 2022, in addition to the two webinars on the National Standards mentioned above¹:

- A two-hour webinar on *Social Justice in the High School Classroom: Hands-on Activities and Practical Advice*
- The APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers
- The APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers

¹The APA/Clark Workshop and the pre-convention workshop were held with generous support from Lee Gurel, PhD, through the American Psychological Foundation (APF); the APA/APF/Oregon State Workshop was held with generous support from the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools and from support from the Oregon State University School of Psychological Science.

- A one-day workshop before APA 2022
- Three sessions at the APA 2022:
 - Missy Beers, PhD, The Ohio State University, and Stephen Foley, The Linsly School, *Lee Gurel Lecture: The Future of Introductory Psychology: Integrative themes, revised standards, and a new approach to teaching*
 - Richard M Lee, PhD, University of Minnesota, *Teaching Psychology and Social Justice Issues Using Comics*
 - Richard Seefeldt, PhD, University of Wisconsin River Falls, *Randal M. Ernst Lecture: Understanding mental disorders and building resiliency in an age of crisis.*

A total of 284 teachers attended our live webinars or in-person workshops this year. The three APA 2022 sessions were each attended by an average of 22 teachers.

Promoting the value of high impact TOPSS resources

In support of the APA strategic plan goals to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*” and “*strengthen APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology*,” a final TOPSS priority in 2022 was to promote high impact TOPSS resources through the monthly TOPSS chair emails, over the TOPSS Facebook page, and in professional development opportunities. Of twenty resources promoted via TOPSS eblasts in 2022, pageviews on average from 2021 and 2022 increased by 24.83%. The TOPSS chair’s monthly eblast open rate was 43% on average.

APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools

In support of the APA strategic plan goals to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*” and “*strengthen APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology*,” the TOPSS Committee, through the APA Education Directorate, received its fourth grant from the American Psychological Foundation (APF) David and Carol Myers Fund. The Committee requested a \$39,000 grant to support the following:

- A three-day workshop for high school psychology teachers at Oregon State University
- Updates to the APA TOPSS High School Psychology Course Template in the Canvas learning management system
- Revision of an original TOPSS unit lesson plan on *Social Psychology*.
- Development of a video to promote TOPSS resources and TOPSS as a professional learning community for teachers
- A new initiative to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the high school psychology curriculum

TOPSS planned this final initiative as a multi-year project, which involves developing resources (e.g., notable psychologists, research studies, and guiding questions) for all the content standards in the *National Standards*, that highlight different facets of diversity. In keeping with APA’s focus on eradicating racism, the first set of resources will focus on race.

New TOPSS Unit Lesson Plan on Positive Psychology

In support of the APA strategic plan goal to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*,” a new TOPSS unit lesson plan on *Positive Psychology* was published in February 2022².

²Supported by a 2020 APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools grant.

Recognition of High School Psychology Students

In support of the APA strategic goals to “*elevate the public’s understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology*” and “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*,” TOPSS held a competition in which students were invited to write an essay addressing how psychology can inform our understanding of a societal systemic problem. The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee recognized three high school students as winners of the 2022 competition.

TOPSS also offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2022, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms.

APF Grant Support for High School Psychology Teachers

In support of the APA strategic goal to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*,” TOPSS, through APF funding, continued to support the development and maintenance of regional teaching networks as a way of promoting local professional development opportunities for teachers. Ten APF grants were awarded this year to support regional teaching networks.³

TOPSS also recommended travel awards that were awarded to six high school psychology teachers to attend the APA convention and the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s Annual Conference on Teaching⁴.

APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Awards

In support of the APA strategic goal to “*elevate the public’s understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology*,” the APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee were pleased to recognize three teachers with the APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award.

Membership Outreach and Services

In support of the APA strategic goals to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*” and to “*strengthen APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology*,” the TOPSS Committee, through the APA Education Directorate, continued to support a Facebook page, distributed monthly e-blasts from the TOPSS chair to all TOPSS members, and maintained a listserv. TOPSS Committee members also contributed to the *Psychology Teacher Network* news digest.

Other Collaborations

In support of the APA operating principles to “*build a stronger association*” and “*increase organizational effectiveness*,” a TOPSS representative attended an APA EDI Virtual Summit: Psychology’s Role in Dismantling Systemic Racism, held in June 2022. TOPSS also named a liaison to an advisory panel to Psi Alpha, the High School National Honor Society in Psychology. TOPSS also had a representative to the APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education in 2022.

³ These APF High School Psychology Outreach grants were supported by funding from the APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology and the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools, with support for new teaching networks coming from the latter.

⁴These APF Professional Development Awards were supported by funding from the APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology.