

**APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)
2025 Annual Report**

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Staff Liaisons: Emily Leary Chesnes, MBA, and Beth Schwartz, PhD

The TOPSS Committee set five goals for 2025:

- To ensure high school students have access to accurate, science-based psychology courses that meet the needs of all learners
- To ensure that high school teachers have the professional development opportunities needed to support their teaching of accurate, science-based psychology courses that meet the needs of all learners
- To create and support a strong community of high school psychology teachers with diverse personal and professional identities
- To increase awareness of the value of high school psychology
- To strengthen TOPSS' role as a leading voice for the teaching of high school psychology

These goals were advanced through the initiatives below.

ENSURE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO ACCURATE, SCIENCE-BASED PSYCHOLOGY COURSES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

Identifying and Updating Top Resources for High School Psychology Teachers

In support of the APA strategic plan objective to “grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists” and strategic goal to “strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology,” a subcommittee of TOPSS identified a list of TOPSS resources that most highly align with the APA mission and strategic plan and that are not available elsewhere to teachers. These resources were disseminated to TOPSS members and teachers throughout the year.

Four TOPSS resources were updated and published in 2025, including three from this list of top resources per above (indicated with asterisks below):

- *A Resource Manual for New High School Psychology Teachers** was updated and published online in February 2025.
- *A Building, Guiding, and Sustaining Regional Networks for Psychology Teachers* guide was updated and published online in July 2025.
- A list of frequently asked questions of both new and veteran teachers* was updated and published online in September 2025.
- A webpage on *Psychology Clubs** was updated and published online in November 2025.

Additionally, the Committee continued to issue calls for updated pacing calendars aligned to the 2022 *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* for a webpage on sample pacing calendars. These sample calendars were included on the list of top resources per above.

ENSURE THAT HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS HAVE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED TO SUPPORT THEIR TEACHING OF ACCURATE, SCIENCE-BASED PSYCHOLOGY COURSES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

Learning Opportunities for High School Psychology Teachers

In support of the APA strategic objective to “*grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists*” and strategic goal to “*strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology*,” TOPSS provided learning opportunities for high school psychology teachers. The following opportunities were held in 2025¹:

- The Oregon State University High School Teacher’s Workshop
- Three sessions at APA 2025:
 - Randal M. Ernst Lecture: Psychology and the Law: Foundations, Resources, and Student Career Support, with William Douglas Woody, PhD, University of Northern Colorado
 - Lee Gurel Lecture: Human geography - “Help, I lost my map!”: Understanding Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, with Sarah E. Burgamy, PsyD, PhoenixRISE
 - Pathways Into the Profession: A Panel Discussion on Triumphs and Challenges, with Peggy Brady-Amoon, PhD, Seton Hall University; Elizabeth Yost Hammer, PhD, Xavier University of New Orleans; Todd Joseph, MA, Hillsboro Community College; Hideko Sera, PsyD, Morehouse College; and Virginia Welle, MS, Chippewa Falls Senior High School
- Webinars on:
 - *Building, Guiding, and Sustaining Regional Teaching Networks*
 - *TOPSS Webinar on Positive Psychology*
 - *Teaching Students in the Age of AI: Implications for the Psychology Classroom*
 - *Request for proposals to support teaching workshops*

There were approximately 350 teachers who attended TOPSS live webinars or in-person workshops this year. Additionally, there were over 1,000 people who registered to attend the four webinars combined.

Request for Proposals to Support Teaching Workshops

In support of the APA strategic objective to “*grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists*” and strategic goal to “*strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology*,” TOPSS offered a Request for Proposals program to support teaching workshops for a second year². The goals of the program were to promote high-impact opportunities professional development for high school psychology teachers and increase the pool of psychologist educators who are aware of, and engaged in helping to meet, the needs of high school psychology teachers. Three workshops were supported in 2025:

- Workshop to Support High School Psychology Teachers, held at the University of South Carolina Upstate in May 2025

¹The Oregon State Workshop was held with generous support from the American Psychological Foundation (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.

²The RFP program was supported by generous funding from the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

- Focus on Intro Psych: Building Connections, Elevating Learning, held at McHenry County College (Illinois) in August 2025
- Gulf South Psychology Teachers Workshop, held at Xavier University of Louisiana in August 2025

Additionally, a virtual workshop sponsored by Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia was held in July 2025. The inaugural round of the RFP program supported an in-person workshop at Clayton State University in 2024 and this virtual workshop was held with remaining grant funds.

Nearly 80 educators attended these events held in 2025.

CREATE AND SUPPORT A STRONG COMMUNITY OF HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS WITH DIVERSE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

American Psychological Foundation (APF) Grant Support for High School Psychology Teachers³

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists,”* 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. This year 13 APF grants were awarded to support regional teaching networks, including two that were new networks and three that were networks that had been inactive for several years.

TOPSS also recommended travel awards that were awarded to six high school psychology teachers to attend either APA 2025 or the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s Annual Conference on Teaching. Nine teachers applied for these awards.

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

In support of the APA strategic goal to *“elevate the public’s understanding, appreciation, and utilization of psychology,”* APA and the TOPSS Committee recognized three teachers with the APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broecker Excellence in Teaching Award. There were nine nominees for these awards in 2025.

Membership Outreach and Services

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists”* and strategic goal to *“strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology,”* the TOPSS Committee, with support of APA staff, continued to support a Facebook page, distributed monthly e-blasts from the TOPSS chair to all TOPSS members, and maintained a listserv.

TOPSS Committee Elections

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists”* and operating principle to *“increase organizational effectiveness,”* and in an effort to broaden the representation of the TOPSS community on the Committee, TOPSS

³ The APF High School Psychology Outreach grants were supported by funding from the APF Lee Gurel Fund for High School Psychology and the APF Professional Development Awards were supported by the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

issued a call for Committee candidates that encouraged members who taught outside the United States, had experience teaching on-level psychology, and/or were within their first 10 years of teaching to consider running as a member-at-large candidate. The number of TOPSS committee nominees increased by 100% between 2024 (5 nominees) and 2025 (10 nominees).

INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Recognition of High School Psychology Students

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists”* and strategic goal to *“strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology,”* TOPSS held a competition in which students were invited to create a video not longer than three minutes that demonstrated how psychological science can be utilized to understand and counter the spread of misinformation. . APA and the TOPSS Committee recognized three high school students as winners of the 2025 competition, out of 250 students from 26 countries who participated.

TOPSS also offered Recognition of Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2025, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms. This provided the opportunity for recognition of academic achievement in psychology at high school wide awards ceremonies and other school-based events.

STRENGTHEN TOPSS’ ROLE AS A LEADING VOICE FOR THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists”* and strategic goal to *“strengthen APA’s role as a leading voice for psychology,”* the TOPSS Committee, through APA, facilitated projects supported through its APF David and Carol Myers Fund grant and received its seventh grant from the APF Myers Fund. The Committee received a \$48,500 grant in early 2025 that included funds to support the three-day summer workshop at Oregon State University, the Request for Proposals to Support Teaching Workshops, and travel awards for high school teachers, as detailed separately in this report.

APA Presidential Initiative: Engaging Psychology’s Future

In support of the APA strategic objective to *“grow, diversity, develop, and support the next generation of psychologists,”* the TOPSS Committee supported a Presidential Initiative of APA President Debra Kawahara, PhD. The TOPSS Committee’s past chair served on the Presidential Initiative Task Force and Committee members both participated in and helped announce the Initiative to TOPSS members and other teaching colleagues throughout the year.

Other Collaborations

In support of the APA operating principle to *“increase organizational effectiveness,”* TOPSS had a liaison on an advisory board to Psi Alpha, the High School National Honor Society in Psychology, as well as a representative on the APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education in 2025.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE WORK IN 2025

Policy and Planning Board (P&P) Self-Study

In 2025, TOPSS participated in the P&P Self-Study.

Review of APA Awards

In response to a request from the APA Board of Directors, TOPSS recommended continuing two awards under its purview: the APA TOPSS Charles T. Blair-Broecker Excellence in Teaching Awards and the APA TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students.

Advise APA on issues related to high school psychology

The TOPSS Committee responded to a request from the APA Election Committee to develop up to three questions for the APA President-elect. TOPSS also provided feedback on the revised Ethics Code in spring 2025.