

APA Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) 2023 Annual Report

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The TOPSS Committee set four goals for 2023: to ensure high school students have access to accurate, science-based psychology courses that promote issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion; to increase awareness of the value of high school psychology; to strengthen the teaching of high school psychology to benefit students, teachers, and society; and to work to dismantle racism through high school psychology education. These goals were advanced through the initiatives below.

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 continued its support of the dissemination of the revised *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula*, approved by Council in February 2022. TOPSS members in five states contacted their state board or department of education regarding the *National Standards*. In December, a poster highlighting the *National Standards* integrative themes and pillar model was mailed to all TOPSS members¹.

New Project to Broaden Representation and Diversity in the High School Psychology Curriculum

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*,” TOPSS recommended and facilitated the development of a comprehensive set of resources² on race and racialized identity aligned to the *National Standards* pillars. The resources, which included psychologist profiles, research summaries, guiding questions, and additional resources, were posted to the TOPSS website and shared with over 5,000 teachers in 2023.

Video on TOPSS Resources and TOPSS as a Professional Learning Community

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*,” TOPSS oversaw the development of a new video³ to highlight TOPSS resources and the benefits of TOPSS as a professional learning community. The video was posted to the TOPSS website and had been reviewed 679 times by December 31, 2023.

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*,” TOPSS provided

¹ This mailing was supported by the American Psychological Foundation (APF) Lee Gurel Fund for the Professional Development of High School Teachers of Psychology.

² These resources were created with support from the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

³ This video was created with support from the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

learning opportunities for high school psychology teachers. The following opportunities were held in 2023⁴:

- The APA/Clark University Workshop for High School Teachers
- The APA/APF/Oregon State University Psychological Science Workshop for High School Psychology Teachers (held as a hybrid workshop)
- Three sessions at the APA 2023:
 - *Lee Gurel Lecture: Let's Give Them Something to Talk About: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Classroom* (Mary Kite, PhD, Ball State University)
 - *Randal M. Ernst Lecture: EDI Initiatives and K-12 Schools: Supporting Teachers, Parents, and Students* (Tammy Hughes, PhD, Duquesne University)
 - *Schools in Need: Mental Health and SEL Resources for K-12 Teachers* (Steven Turner, Albemarle County Public Schools, Virginia, and Amanda Dettmer, PhD, Yale Child Study Center)
- A webinar on *New Resources to Infuse Diversity into the High School Psychology Course*

Over 140 teachers attended our live webinars or in-person workshops this year. The APA/Clark University Workshop held in July 2023 was the final Clark University Workshop. TOPSS would like to note its sincere appreciation to APF, Nancy Budwig, PhD, and her colleagues at Clark University, and especially Lee Gurel, PhD, for their support and sponsorship of this workshop, held each summer⁵ since 2005.

New TOPSS Resources

In support of the APA strategic plan goal to “*prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future*,” two new TOPSS unit lesson plans on *Stress and Health* and *Gender* were published in January and February 2023, respectively⁶. *Stress and Health* was downloaded 1,843 times in 2023, and *Gender* was downloaded 725 times. A vetting rubric for teachers to use to assess the quality of classroom resources was also updated in 2023 and was downloaded 73 times after it was revised in October 2023.

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 create a video not longer than 3 minutes that demonstrated their understanding of how a topic in psychological science has the potential to benefit their school and/or local community and improve people’s lives. The APA Education Directorate and the TOPSS Committee recognized three high school students as winners of the 2023 competition.

TOPSS also offered Academic Achievement in Psychology Certificates to all TOPSS affiliates in 2023, so that teachers could recognize outstanding student achievement in their classrooms.

⁴The APA/Clark Workshop was held with generous support from Lee Gurel, PhD, through 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.

⁵ The APA/Clark Workshop was not held in 2020 or 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

⁶Both lesson plans were supported by the APF David and Carol Myers Fund to Support Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

American Psychological Foundation (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. Six APF grants were awarded this year to support regional teaching networks, including four that were either new networks or networks that were restarting again after being inactive since the start of the pandemic.

TOPSS also recommended travel awards that were awarded to eight high school psychology teachers to attend the APA convention, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s Annual Conference on Teaching, and the Advanced Placement Annual Conference⁷.

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.

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, facilitated projects supported through its 2022 APF David and Carol Myers Fund grant and received its fifth grant from the APF Myers Fund. The Committee requested a \$41,000 grant in early 2023 to support the three-day summer workshop at Oregon State University, the project on broadening representation and diversity in the high school curriculum, and the travel awards for high school teachers, each detailed separately in this report.

Other Collaborations

In support of the APA operating principles to “*build a stronger association*” and “*increase organizational effectiveness*,” TOPSS contributed to the APA’s Racial Equity Action Plan in March 2023. TOPSS also had a liaison to an advisory panel to Psi Alpha, the High School National Honor Society in Psychology, as well as a representative to the APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education in 2023.

⁷ 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.