



The History of the NASISP Coalition

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for all Handicapped Children Act to guide and assist states in providing services to the nation's children with disabilities. The original law, Public Law 94-142, is now known as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law includes provisions that require schools to provide the necessary *related services* (see [Federal Definitions](#)) necessary for students with special needs to access the curriculum and help them succeed.

A group of provider organizations, including the American Psychological Association (APA); the National Association of Social Workers (NASW); the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA); the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA); and the National Association of Pupil Services Administrators (NAPSA) joined together to discuss the implications of the new law for these students and the providers of these services. As these services are also referenced in the general education statute, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as *pupil services*, these organizations formed the **National Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations (NAPSO)**. Since 1976, NAPSO has participated in activities to support the nation's children with special needs.

During the 1980s, NAPSO invited additional organizations to join the coalition: the American Dance Therapy Association; the American Art Therapy Association (AATA); and the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). These Creative Arts Therapies have participated in Hill Day presentations demonstrating the unique contributions of arts therapies for children with disabilities and to other professional organization conferences such as the National Parent Teacher Association. In 1986, NAPSO joined with the American School Health Association (ASHA) to present a national conference featuring the coordination of services for children for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

In the '90s NAPSO joined the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and others to produce [Health Is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs](#) through a grant from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School Health. In 1994, NAPSO joined with the National Education Goals Panel to co-host the national conference "*Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Collaborative Approach to Achieving Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-free Schools Conducive to Learning.*"

Since 2000, NAPSO has increased its legislative focus, meeting with Congress and the Administration to increase the understanding and representation of pupil and related services through research and legislative language in the reauthorizations of ESEA, IDEA, and the Higher Education Act. NAPSO also developed presentations on our collaborative services model that has been replicated across the country at multiple education and provider group conferences.

For more than 30 years, NAPS0 representatives from each organization meet monthly to keep abreast of new laws and regulations, formulate conjoint policy statements for government and regulatory agencies, and to arrange meetings with the members of Congress and the Department of Education. Each NAPS0 organization provides the support and resources of their representatives' volunteer time to collaborate on coalition projects, draft letters and talking points, and share the latest research and best practices from the field. The chairpersons are elected from membership on a rotational basis.

In 2012, NAPS0 officially changed its name to **NASISP, the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel**. The new coalition name corresponds with the revised terminology being advanced in federal education statute, specialized instructional support personnel (SISP). The use of the term, SISP, more accurately reflects the nature and purpose of the services that these professionals provide to students in schools. The term SISP emphasizes that these professionals are specially trained and provide highly specialized services, that the services and interventions they provide support students and teachers, promote better learning outcomes, and facilitate improved instruction. Furthermore, establishing one common statutory term between both general and special education laws eases any confusion of who these providers are and more clearly encompass the range of services provided to all students.

In 2015, Congress passed the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA) making the statutory language change in law, eliminating the term "pupil services personnel" and including an updated definition of specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) and highlighting their role in academic and school success.

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