School psychologists are employed by public schools, private schools and Head Start in all states and territories. School psychologists evaluate students’ academic/social skills and intervene to help solve conflicts related to problems with learning and adjustment. In addition, school psychologists are often asked to evaluate and plan academic programs, behavior modification procedures, and other services provided by schools. Lastly, school psychologists may serve as a liaison between the school and the community to disseminate information regarding issues such as substance abuse, child abuse, and learning disabilities.

**Job Description**

In addition to school positions, school psychologists can work in hospitals and other medical settings as a liaison between physicians, families, and schools to meet the educational needs of children. Individuals with a doctoral degree may also teach for a college or university. School psychologists are usually paid on a 10-month contract, although some (such as those in hospitals and pediatric clinics) have a 12-month contract. In smaller school districts, school psychologists may be paid on a teacher salary scale but start at a higher salary than beginning teachers because they enter with 60-70 graduate credit hours and a graduate degree. In larger districts, psychologists are often paid according to a separate pay scale that is higher than the one used for teachers.

The following book provides information about the history, job roles, and responsibilities of school psychologists. It also includes information on how to select a graduate program. It is available in the CMU library (but is often on reserve under the name “Jacob”):


**Educational Requirements**

In order to be a school psychologist, you must obtain a specialist degree or a Ph.D. in school psychology. (A specialist degree requires more credit hours than a typical master’s degree but less than a Ph.D. It is usually 2 years of full-time coursework and a 1-year full-time internship.) You do not need a teaching certificate. Most graduate programs in school psychology require that their students attend on a full time basis.

**Further Information**

Visit the following websites for further information:
www.apa.org for information about various fields of psychology (click into “Students” and “Considering a Career in Psychology?”)

*Graduate Study in Psychology* (updated frequently). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. A list of graduate programs in all fields of psychology with information about admission requirements. Ask for it at the reference desk in the library.
