



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE *of the* PRESIDENT

March 28, 2025

Dr. Brandon Tatum, Executive Director
Regional University System of Oklahoma
305 N.W. 5th #407
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Dear Dr. Tatum:

Following RUSO policy to inform member institutions, Northeastern State University will submit a Letter of Intent to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) indicating NSU's intent to seek approval to offer a new Education Specialist degree.

Institution: Northeastern State University

Official Degree Designation & Program Title: Ed.S. in School Psychology

Location: Tahlequah and Broken Arrow

Delivery Method: Online and face-to-face delivery

Contact Information: Dr. Carla Swearingen, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

Short Description of the Proposed Program

The Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) in School Psychology program at Northeastern State University is designed to address the urgent need for highly trained school psychologists. This program focuses on preparing culturally sensitive practitioners capable of serving diverse populations, including rural, suburban, and Native American communities. The curriculum emphasizes a comprehensive approach, incorporating assessment, mental health, academic interventions, crisis management, and family-school-community collaboration. This program aims to foster professionals adept at supporting students' academic, social, behavioral, and emotional success, responding effectively to the increasing challenges in mental health and educational disparities.

A Summary of the Employment Demand

Lightcast data for Oklahoma indicates a robust growth in the employment demand for school psychologists, with a significant increase in job postings from 2021 to 2023. Specifically, there were 2,382 job postings in this period, reflecting a posting intensity of 2-to-1. In 2021, there

were 383 positions for school psychologists, which expanded by 12.79% to 72 new annual openings by 2023. However, despite this growth and the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting a 4% increase in the field nationally, Oklahoma still drastically falls short of the recommended ratio with only one school psychologist per 3,301 students, emphasizing a critical shortage, especially in rural and Native American communities where culturally competent professionals are urgently needed.

How the Program Addresses an Unmet Need in the State

The proposed Ed.S. program in School Psychology at Northeastern State University is strategically designed to mitigate the severe shortage in Oklahoma. This initiative aims to substantially increase the number of trained school psychologists, addressing the significant service gap, particularly for the underserved eastern part of the state. Currently, the state only sees about 25 completions annually in school psychology programs, which is inadequate to meet the rising demand and ongoing shortages. By establishing this new program, Northeastern State University plans to produce culturally competent professionals capable of serving Oklahoma's diverse populations, directly impacting regional deficits and supporting broader state and national objectives to enhance educational outcomes and mental health services.

A completed *New Program Request Form* to offer the Ed.S. in School Psychology will be forthcoming. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Swearingen at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Rodney S. Hanley, Ph.D.
President

cc:

Dr. Carla Swearingen, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Cari Keller, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Vanessa Anton, Dean, College of Education

Dr. Iain Anderson, Dean, Graduate College