

State Board of Psychology

Holly Wilson, Budget Analyst

- Enacted budget calls for transferring the Board's funding and duties to the Department of Health in FY 2007
- Number of investigations and hearings on the rise

OVERVIEW

Duties and Responsibilities

The State Board of Psychology was formed in 1972 in order to provide regulatory oversight of psychologists and nonschool-based school psychologists (the State Department of Education regulates school-based school psychologists). The primary mission of the Board is to provide protection to the public through examinations, licensing, monitoring of continuing education, monitoring of unlicensed practice, (both supervised practice of extenders and illegal practice), and to investigate complaints and discipline licensees pursuant to Chapter 4732. of the Revised Code.

The Psychology Board is part of the 4K9 Fund Group. The 4K9 Fund (Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund) is a General Services Fund that is a repository for license fees and other assessments collected by the state's professional and occupational licensing boards. The 4K9 Fund was established by Am. Sub. H.B. 152 of the 120th General Assembly. Prior to the creation of the fund, appropriations for each licensing board were made from the GRF. This created some problems as some boards contributed more revenues than they expended and others had to be subsidized by the GRF since the revenues generated did not meet their expenditures. The 4K9 Fund eliminated these problems. The philosophy of the fund is that each board must generate enough revenues to cover their expenses. It is also quite common for the boards to develop a surplus in the fund to cover unforeseen economic hardships.

Licensing

The Board acts as the enforcement and compliance body for ensuring maintenance of accountability among licensees. Licensees, currently numbering approximately 4,000, must renew their licenses biannually during the summer of odd-numbered fiscal years. In addition, the Board is charged with monitoring the registration and practice of approximately 2,500 unlicensed supervisees working under the licensed authority of psychologists. The Board has an FTE count of seven, although the current vacancy makes the employee count five. Of the seven FTEs, one FTE accounts for the salaries of the Board members. License renewal fees plus other revenues generate average annual receipts of approximately \$700,000, allowing the Board to be self-supporting through the 4K9 Fund.

Enforcement

The Board performs on average approximately 100 investigations each year. Currently, the Board has two investigators. Two years ago, the caseload was approximately 70 open cases. According to the Board, this leaves them chronically stressed in the enforcement division. To put this in perspective, the Board held only twelve hearings during the decade of the 1990s. Currently, they have held five

hearings in the last six-month period. Dealing with this hardship, the Board requested funding for 20 hours weekly of dedicated legal services from the Office of the Attorney General. The Board wanted to have more of an in-office presence from the Attorney General's Office to assist in timely processing of complaints toward hearing, Consent Agreement, or closure. According to the Board, the currently available three to ten hours per week of legal services is no longer tenable with so many cases moving toward hearings.

Summary of FY 2006-2007 Budget Issues

Board Consolidation

In the enacted version of Am. Sub. H.B. 66 of the 126th General Assembly, 20 of the independent occupational licensing boards are to be consolidated into the departments of Health, Commerce, and Public Safety in FY 2007. As a result, the affected boards received no funding in FY 2007. In the case of the Psychology Board, the Board and its duties will be consolidated into the Department of Health. The specifics of this transfer will be addressed during FY 2006 by a task force consisting of the departments of Commerce, Health, Public Safety, and Administrative Services, and the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), as well as three members selected by the affected boards. According to OBM, current staff will be retained through FY 2006 and a hiring freeze and early retirement incentives will be offered to regulatory board staff. Effective July 1, 2006, all remaining regulatory board staff will be transferred to the relevant agency. Board members will be retained.

The biggest challenge the consolidation presents for the Psychology Board is the uncertainty of how its functions will be affected under the Department of Health. The Board collects license fees, which are deposited in the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K9). License renewal fees plus other revenues generate average annual receipts of approximately \$640,000 allowing the Board to be self-supporting.

Agency in Brief

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Number of Employees*	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill(s)
	2006	2007	2006	2007	
5	\$566,112	\$0	\$0	\$0	Am. Sub. H.B. 66

* Employee count obtained from the Psychology Board Executive Director.

Vetoed Provisions

There were no vetoed provisions in the enacted budget that affect the Psychology Board.

ANALYSIS OF THE ENACTED BUDGET

For budget purposes, as detailed below, the State Board of Psychology is considered a single program series agency and its activities are not subdivided into separate programs.

Program Series 1

License/Registration/Enforcement

Purpose: To enforce and regulate the practice of psychology and nonschool-based school psychology.

The following table shows the line items that are used to fund the License/Registration/Enforcement program series, as well as the enacted budget funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2006	FY 2007
General Services Fund				
GSF	4K9	Operating Expenses	\$566,112	\$0
General Services Fund Subtotal			\$566,112	\$0
Total Funding: Psychology Board			\$566,112	\$0

License/Registration/Enforcement

Program Description: In accordance with Chapter 4732. of the Revised Code, the State Board of Psychology tests, licenses, and regulates all psychologists and nonschool-based school psychologists who practice in Ohio.

Funding Source: GSF Fund 4K9. Currently, all revenue from the 27 occupational licensing boards is placed in Fund 4K9 and then reallocated to each board. Each board is expected to raise enough revenue through its license fees to cover its expenses.

Implication of the Enacted Budget: The most notable change in the Board's budget comes from the move the Psychology Board, along with other licensing and regulatory boards, will make into the Department of Health. The biggest challenge the consolidation presents for the Psychology Board is the uncertainty of how its functions would be affected under the Department of Health. The Board collects license fees, which are deposited in the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K9). License renewal fees plus other revenues generate average annual receipts of approximately \$640,000, allowing the Board to be self-supporting.

Both the Board and LSC are uncertain at this time if the consolidation will affect the Board's staffing level. Under the budget, the Board would be subject to a hiring freeze and early retirement buy-outs in FY 2007. The Board currently has a staffing level of five FTEs. Also uncertain at this time is whether the Board would move its office from the Vern Riffe Center.

Temporary and Permanent Law Provisions: Consolidation of Regulatory Boards (Section 315.03). The executive budget contains a temporary law provision that: (1) expresses the intent to consolidate health-related regulatory boards, including the Psychology Department of Health not later than July 1, 2006, (2) creates a transition team to develop a plan to ensure the smooth and timely transition of those boards into the Department, and (3) expresses the intent to introduce a bill in FY 2006 that will include the necessary statutory changes to effect the consolidation and include revised appropriations for FY 2007.