The mission of the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) is to ensure all students have the supports, services, and skills necessary to succeed in school and life.

NASISP is a coalition of national professional organizations whose members provide and support a variety of school-based prevention and intervention services to assist students in becoming effective learners and productive citizens. NASISP organizations represent over a million members, including school counselors, school nurses, psychologists, school psychologists, social workers and school social workers; occupational therapists, physical therapists, art therapists, dance/movement therapists, and music therapists; speech-language pathologists; audiologists; teachers, students, parents, and administrators. NASISP promotes interdisciplinary practice and cooperation, and advocates for ensuring access to quality specialized instructional support services (i.e., pupil services and related services under ESEA and IDEA, respectively) for all students.

Specialized instructional support personnel provide evidence based services, closely aligned with the strategic goals of the US Department of Education, including:

- Supporting improved student learning and effective teaching;
- Promoting student success by removing barriers to learning;
- Facilitating collaboration and coordination of services among school staff, families, and the community;
- Fostering positive school climate; and
- Facilitating positive student health, wellness, and development.

**Specialized Instructional Support Personnel include:**

**Art Therapy Services**

Art therapy is a master's level mental health profession in which students, facilitated by the art therapist, use the process of art making to explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behavior and addictions, develop social skills, improve reality orientation, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem. Art therapy in the school setting can be tailored to support academic and social/emotional requirements. Students in individual art therapy may work toward improved cognitive growth, emotional control, the mastery of sensory-motor skills, and positive adjustment to the classroom experience. School art therapy services have been successfully used to facilitate students' ability to function as effectively as possible within the academic environment.

**Dance/Movement Therapy Services**

Since 1974 Dance/movement therapists have provided services to children in regular and special education classes in schools and agencies across the country. Dance/movement therapy is used to enhance learning, improve physical skills, and address emotional and social difficulties through the nonverbal medium. Increasing these aspects of a child's development assists children to take full advantage of the learning environment. Research supports the unique contribution of Dance/movement therapy to children, families, and teachers.

**Music Therapy Services**
Music Therapy is an established health profession in which music is used to address physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and/or social functioning. Music therapy can facilitate development in communication and sensori-motor skills, promote learning and skill acquisition, stimulate attention, and increase motivation to participate more fully in other aspects of the educational setting. Recognized as a related service, music therapy serves as an integral component in helping the child with special needs attain educational goals identified by his/her IEP team, either through direct or consultant services.

**Occupational Therapy Services**
School-based occupational therapy focuses on helping students engage in important learning activities, or “occupations,” needed to participate successfully in school activities and routines. Services include evaluation and assessment, intervention, prevention, and health and wellness promotion, and address students’ underlying motor, process and communication/interaction skills and their impact on performance. Occupational therapists work with students individually and in small groups and consult with parents, teachers and other school personnel to help raise student achievement and school success.

**Physical Therapy Services**
Physical therapy is one of many related services under Part B of IDEA. School-based physical therapy is provided to support the goals established in a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) and to promote access, participation, self-determination, and progress through the curriculum. Physical therapists work collaboratively with the IEP team, other educational personnel, and staff to achieve these aims. Physical therapists provide screening, evaluation, program planning, and intervention to address educational needs, such as:
- working with students and their peers
- training families and education personnel
- measuring and documenting progress
- providing consultation for school and community access, equipment, and safety
- offering expertise to address challenges as they occur

Physical therapists can work with students directly on motor and safety skills to improve mobility and independence. They can also work on behalf of students, using their unique expertise to afford student access to the classroom, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, bus, school campus, and transition planning (e.g., work sites, community access, and other post-school endeavors).

Physical therapists work to improve schools and programs by:
- identifying and addressing architectural barriers
- assisting with professional development for safety, injury prevention, and transportation
- consulting on policies, activities, and procedures (e.g. recreational opportunities, emergency evacuation, ergonomics, and health promotion)

**Psychological Services**
Psychologists and school psychologists provide services to children, adolescents, families, and school staff by drawing on their expertise in the science and practice of both psychology and education. They provide a range of psychological services including assessment; intervention; prevention; crisis preparation and response; individual, group, and family counseling; teacher consultation; health promotion, and program development and evaluation. Their special focus is the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems.

**School Counselor Services**
Professional school counselors develop comprehensive school counseling programs that promote and enhance student learning, utilize data to improve program implementation and identify students in need, and ensure all students are college/career-ready. Above all, school counselors are student advocates who work cooperatively with other individuals and organizations to promote the development of children, youth, and families in their communities. School counselors, as members of the educational team, consult and collaborate with teachers, administrators, and families to assist students to be successful academically, vocationally, and personally.

**School Social Work Services**
School social workers provide direct mental health services to students, including one to one counseling, group work, classroom presentations, crisis intervention, and assessment. School social workers work as part of a multidisciplinary team in providing special education services and determining eligibility for special education and related services. They work closely with other school personnel and consult with individual teachers and groups of teachers on issues related to behavior management, classroom management, and special concerns about individual students.

**School Nurse Services**
School nurses are extensions of the public health system and a vital component of the care of children with chronic health conditions and disabilities. School nurses provide risk management of student health and safety; health promotion and disease prevention; episodic care of student illness and injury; and case management related to chronic health conditions and academic access. A significant proportion of health care in the United States is provided daily in schools. Many of the children school nurses see are not served by the traditional health care system. School nurses connect students to CHIP, and families to Medicaid. They help many of the school children who live every day in the margins of society to connect to a medical home. Often times, the school nurse provides the only health care accessible to some school aged children.

**Speech-Language Pathology Services**
Speech-language pathologists provide services for students with speech, language, and swallowing disorders and provide services to students with other disabilities such as learning disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation/developmental disabilities. Other important roles for speech-language pathologists involve collaborating with teachers to develop and provide intervention strategies to enhance literacy skills and intervention to improve social communication skills for all students.

**Effective Specialized Instructional Support Services: Evidence-Based Research**

- Art Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- NASP
- ADTA
- SSWAA
- Music Therapy
- AOTA
- School Nurses
- American Psychological Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
Supporting improved student learning and effective teaching


**Promoting student success by removing barriers to learning**


Facilitating collaboration and coordination of services among school staff, families, and the community


**Fostering a positive school climate**