The NASP Practice Model Helps Schools Successfully:

**Improve Academic Engagement and Achievement**
High expectations and academic rigor for all students set the foundation for schools that both raise expectations and close achievement gaps. However, providing rich content and rigor alone is not enough for struggling students. School psychologists work with educators and families to:

- Identify and remedy barriers to learning, such as disabilities; mental or physical health problems; or social, cultural, language, or family issues
- Implement appropriate academic interventions by monitoring the effectiveness of academic interventions, developing student organizational skills, and promoting the use of learning strategies
- Implement appropriate social–emotional and behavioral strategies such as those that are designed to improve attention, strengthen motivation, and promote student problem-solving

Interventions that foster students’ engagement in learning contribute to more positive, orderly classroom environments, increase time focused on learning, and increase school attendance and graduation rates.

**Facilitate Effective Instruction**
Rigorous, quality curricula must be matched with effective instruction that meets the individual needs of diverse learners. School psychologists consult with teachers on how to:

- Individualize instruction
- Manage classroom behavior
- Monitor student progress
- Evaluate classroom data
- Adjust intervention and instructional strategies to make content accessible to every student

Increasingly, this consultation occurs within a response-to-intervention or problem-solving process, which has been shown to improve achievement for students in the general education classroom and reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. Teachers who consult with their school psychologist receive support for working with struggling students, improve their classroom management and teaching skills, and are more able to focus on effective instruction for all students.

**Support Positive Behavior and Socially Successful Students**
Promoting students’ positive behavior and social interactions directly supports their academic achievement and contributes to a healthy learning environment. School psychologists provide services that promote children’s communication and social skills, problem solving, anger management, conflict resolution, self-regulation, self-determination, resilience, and optimism. They consult with teachers and administrators on:

- Classroom management strategies
- Programs promoting positive peer relationships and social problem solving
- School-wide positive behavior interventions and supports
- The use of effective discipline policies and practices
- Programs to promote student wellness and reduce risk-taking

Additionally, school psychologists provide mental health services, including wellness and prevention programming, risk assessment and interventions, and counseling, which are proven to reduce discipline referrals and increase attendance and academic performance. They also coordinate community services provided in schools to ensure their link to learning.

**Support Diverse Learners**
Successfully meeting the needs of a wide range of diverse learners can be a challenge for schools. School psychologists have special expertise in working with students who have disabilities or health problems, who face cultural or linguistic barriers, or whose family or socioeconomic situation affects their learning. They work with teachers and other staff to:

- Assess learning and behavior needs and distinguish between issues related to family, culture, or language and a learning style or disability
- Plan appropriate Individualized Education Programs for students with disabilities
- Modify and adapt curricula and instruction
- Adjust classroom facilities and routines to promote greater student engagement
- Promote positive relationships among all students
- Monitor and effectively communicate with parents about student progress
- Coordinate links to community services

School psychologists work with school administrators to ensure that education plans are designed and implemented so students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environments.

**Create Safe, Positive School Climates**
Positive school climate is a critical factor in student achievement. No matter how good the curriculum and instruction are, a negative learning environment will interfere with student outcomes. School psychologists work with school leadership teams to help choose, design, and evaluate evidence-based approaches to address issues such as bullying prevention, student connectedness, family engagement, cultural responsiveness, and crisis response planning. They contribute expertise in:
The NASP Practice Model is framed on six organizational principles that reflect and link to the broader organizational principles of effective schools. These principles are summarized below.

**Principle 1.** Services are coordinated and delivered in a comprehensive and seamless continuum that considers the needs of consumers and utilizes an evidence-based program evaluation model.

**Principle 2.** The professional climate facilitates effective service delivery that allows school psychologist to advocate for and provide appropriate services.

**Principle 3.** Physical, personnel, and fiscal systems support appropriately trained and adequate numbers of school psychologists, and provide adequate financial and physical resources to practice effectively.

**Principle 4.** Policies and practices exist that result in positive, proactive communication among employees at all administrative levels.

**Principle 5.** All personnel have levels and types of supervision and/or mentoring adequate to ensure the provision of effective and accountable services.

**Principle 6.** Individual school psychologists and school systems create professional development plans annually that are both adequate for and relevant to the service delivery priorities of the school system.
The NASP Practice Model Improves Outcomes for Students and Schools.

All children deserve a high-quality, genuinely accessible education that supports their high academic achievement and healthy development, and prepares them for responsible citizenship and success in a global economy. Services and supports that lower barriers to learning, like those provided by school psychologists, are central to this mission.

School psychologists are uniquely qualified members of school teams that support teachers’ ability to teach and children’s ability to learn. They provide direct educational, behavioral, and mental health services for children and youth, as well as work with families, school administrators, educators, and other professionals to create supportive learning and social environments for all students.
10 Domains of Practice

Practices That Permeate All Aspects of Service Delivery

Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and methods of assessment and data collection for identifying strengths and needs, developing effective services and programs, and measuring progress and outcomes.

Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration
School psychologists have knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and communication applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems and methods to promote effective implementation of services.

Direct and Indirect Services for Children, Families, and Schools

Student-Level Services

Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills
School psychologists have knowledge of biological, cultural, and social influences on academic skills; human learning, cognitive, and developmental processes; and evidence-based curricula and instructional strategies.

Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills
School psychologists have knowledge of biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on behavior and mental health, behavioral and emotional impacts on learning and life skills, and evidence-based strategies to promote social–emotional functioning and mental health.

Systems-Level Services

Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning
School psychologists have knowledge of school and systems structure, organization, and theory; general and special education; technology resources; and evidence-based school practices that promote learning and mental health.

Domain 6: Preventive and Responsive Services
School psychologists have knowledge of principles and research related to resilience and risk factors in learning and mental health, services in schools and communities to support multiliteracy prevention, and evidence-based strategies for effective crisis response.

Domain 7: Family–School Collaboration Services
School psychologists have knowledge of principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, and culture; evidence-based strategies to support family influences on children’s learning and mental health; and strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools.

Foundations of School Psychological Service Delivery

Domain 8: Diversity in Development and Learning
School psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse student characteristics; principles and research related to diversity factors for children, families, and schools, including factors related to culture, context, and individual and role difference; and evidence-based strategies to enhance services and address potential influences related to diversity.

Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation
School psychologists have knowledge of research design, statistics, measurement, varied data collection and analysis techniques, and program evaluation sufficient for understanding research and interpreting data in applied settings.

Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice
School psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of school psychology; multiple service models and methods; ethical, legal, and professional standards; and other factors related to professional identity and effective practice as school psychologists.
• Data collection and analysis
• Social–emotional learning
• Child development and behavior
• Violence prevention
• Crisis and trauma prevention and response
• Home–school–community collaboration

Positive school climates contribute to improved academic achievement, graduation rates, student attitudes, and connection in school, and to more trusting, respectful relationships among school staff, students, and families.

Strengthen Family–School Partnerships

Students whose families are engaged in their school experience do better academically, socially, and emotionally. How and to what extent parents and other caregivers are involved in their children’s learning and extracurricular activities depends on many factors, including opportunity, culture, language, attitudes toward school, past experience, access to information, and school climate. School psychologists provide specific support to help families:

• Understand and support their children’s learning and mental health needs
• Navigate special education processes
• Connect with community service providers when necessary

Engage with teachers and other school staff effectively
• Reinforce the school–family–community partnership

School psychologists work with staff to enhance understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds and to promote culturally responsive schools, which is essential to engaging all families in school life.

Improve Assessment and Accountability

A critical part of making informed decisions is the effective use of data. School psychologists bring extensive knowledge of data collection and analysis to school improvement efforts. They can help school leaders and teachers to:

• Generate and interpret valuable student outcome data
• Make decisions regarding programs and interventions at the district, building, classroom, and individual student levels
• Monitor individual student progress in academics and behavior
• Collect and analyze data on risk and protective factors related to student outcomes

The capacity to both collect the right data and know what to do with the information is essential to meeting the needs of students and making adequate yearly progress and other mandated accountability measures.

A Wise Investment of Existing Resources

School psychologists serve in almost every school in the country. They are a ready resource. Adopting the NASP Practice Model enables schools to make best use of their skills and expertise, and to give all students access to the services that can help them stay engaged and successful in school. School leaders and policy makers interested in moving service provision to the model can work with their school psychologists to assess current practice, resources, and steps toward implementation. NASP provides tools and further guidance to assist in this process; available online at www.nasponline.org/practicemodel. The comprehensive implementation of school psychological services has consistently been shown to support teachers’ ability to teach and students’ ability to learn, and is a cost-effective investment in the success of all students.


The mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to represent school psychology and support school psychologists to enhance the learning and mental health of all children and youth.

Helping children achieve their best. In school. At home. In life.
School Psychologists Work With Students to:

- Provide counseling, instruction, and mentoring for those struggling with social, emotional, and behavioral problems
- Increase achievement by assessing barriers to learning and determining the best instructional strategies to improve learning
- Promote wellness and resilience by reinforcing communication and social skills, problem solving, anger management, self-regulation, self-determination, and optimism
- Enhance understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds

School Psychologists Work With Students and Their Families to:

- Identify and address learning and behavior problems that interfere with school success
- Evaluate eligibility for special education services (within a multidisciplinary team)
- Support students’ social, emotional, and behavioral health
- Teach parenting skills and enhance home–school collaboration
- Make referrals and help coordinate community support services

School Psychologists Work With Teachers to:
• Identify and resolve academic barriers to learning
• Design and implement student progress monitoring systems
• Design and implement academic and behavioral interventions
• Support effective individualized instruction
• Create positive classroom environments
• Motivate all students to engage in learning

School Psychologists Work With Administrators to:
• Collect and analyze data related to school improvement, student outcomes, and accountability requirements
• Implement school-wide prevention programs that help maintain positive school climates conducive to learning
• Promote school policies and practices that ensure the safety of all students by reducing school violence, bullying, and harassment
• Respond to crises by providing leadership, direct services, and coordination with needed community services
• Design, implement, and garner support for comprehensive school mental health programming

WHERE DO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WORK?
The majority of school psychologists work in schools. However, they can practice in a variety of settings, including:
• Public and private schools
• Universities
• School-based health and mental health centers
• Community-based day-treatment or residential clinics and hospitals
• Juvenile justice centers
• Private practice

HOW DO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SCHOOLS?
All children and adolescents face problems from time to time. They may:
• Feel afraid to go to school
• Have difficulty organizing their time efficiently
• Lack effective study skills
• Fall behind in their schoolwork
• Lack self-discipline
• Worry about family matters such as divorce and death
• Feel depressed or anxious
• Experiment with drugs and alcohol
• Think about suicide
• Worry about their sexuality
• Face difficult situations, such as applying to college, getting a job, or quitting school
• Question their aptitudes and abilities
Helping Students With Learning Problems

Tommy’s parents were concerned about his difficulty reading and writing. They feared that he would fall behind and lose confidence in himself. In school the teacher noticed that Tommy often struggled to understand what he was reading and often needed the help of his classmates to do related written work. After observing Tommy, consulting with his teacher, and gathering specific information about his skills, the school psychologist collaborated with his parents and teachers to develop a plan to improve his reading and writing. The plan worked, and Tommy’s reading, writing, and confidence as a learner improved.

Helping Students Cope With Family and Life Stressors

The teacher noticed that Carla, an able student, had stopped participating in class discussions and had difficulty paying attention. The school psychologist was asked to explore why Carla’s behavior had changed so much. After discovering that Carla’s parents were divorcing, the school psychologist provided counseling for Carla and gave her parents suggestions for this difficult time. Carla’s behavior and emotional well-being improved, and she felt more secure about her relationship with her parents.

Helping Students With Behavior Problems Learn New Ways to Respond

David was a high school student who often skipped class and got into fights with others. He acted out in class and had been suspended from school on various occasions. After establishing a relationship with David, the school psychologist taught him simple techniques to relax, recognize his needs, and to control his aggressive behavior. David’s mother and his teacher worked together on a plan designed by the school psychologist to establish limits, recognize David’s escalating tension, and improve communication. David’s relationships with peers and adults improved and he began to make steady progress towards graduation.

The National Association of School Psychologists represents and supports school psychology through leadership to enhance the mental health and educational competence of all children.

School psychologists help children, parents, teachers, and members of the community understand and resolve these concerns. Following are examples of how school psychologists make a difference:

Improving Climates for Learning

Mr. Smith, the middle school principal, was concerned about the increasing number of discipline referrals and students with attendance problems in his school. After reviewing the school’s data with the school psychologist, it was determined that the school had a bullying problem that contributed both to conflicts occurring during unstructured times and students’ staying home from school to avoid being picked on. The school psychologist worked with Mr. Smith, the staff, and parents to establish a school-wide positive behavior supports program that set clear behavioral expectations and rewards for good behavior, and taught students how to respond to conflicts and bullying. The school successfully improved student attendance and decreased the number of office discipline referrals.
Model of Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services
**NASP 10 Domains of Practice**  
Practices That Permeate All Aspects of Service Delivery

**Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability**

- *School psychologist have knowledge…*
  - Varied models and methods of assessment
  - Data collection for identifying strengths and needs
  - Development of effective services and programs
  - Measurement of progress and outcomes

**Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration**

- *School psychologists have knowledge…*
  - Varied models and strategies of consultation
  - Collaborative models to address student and school needs
  - Applicable communication skills to address student, families, and system needs
  - Effective facilitative skills to promote implementation of services
Domain 3: Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop **Academic Skills**

- *School psychologists have knowledge of…*
  - Human learning styles, cognition, and developmental processes
  - Biological, cultural and social influences on academic skills
  - Evidence-based curricula
  - Instructional strategies

Domain 4: Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop **Social and Life Skills**

- *School psychologists have knowledge of…*
  - Biological, cultural, developmental, and social influences on behavior and mental wellness
  - Behavioral and emotional impacts on learning and life skills
  - Evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional functioning
Direct and Indirect Services for Children, Families, and Schools

System-Level Services

Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning

- School psychologists have knowledge of…
  - School and systems structure, organization, and theory
  - General and special education
  - Technology resources
  - Evidence-based school practices that promote learning and mental wellness

Domain 6: Preventive and Responsive Services

- School psychologists have knowledge of…
  - Principles and research related to resilience and risk factors
  - Services in schools and communities to support multi-tiered prevention
  - Evidence-based strategies for effective crisis response

Domain 7: Family-School Collaboration Services

- School psychologists have knowledge of…
  - Principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, culture
  - Evidence-based strategies to support family influences on learning
  - Strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools
Domain 8: Diversity in Development and Learning

- School psychologists have knowledge of...
  - Individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and culture
  - Principles and research related to diversity factors
  - Evidence-based strategies to enhance services and address potential influences related to diversity

Domain 9: Research and Program Evaluation

- School psychologists have knowledge of...
  - Research design, statistics, and measurement
  - Varied data collection and analysis techniques
  - Program evaluation, research, interpreting data in applied settings

Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

- School psychologists have knowledge of...
  - Multiple service models and methods
  - Ethical, legal, and professional standards
Creating capacity to make the best, most effective use of school psychologists’ skills and expertise
School Psychologists can…

- Improve Academic Engagement and Achievement
- Facilitate Effective Instruction
- Support Positive Behavior and Socially Successful Students
- Support Diverse Learners
- Create Safe, Positive School Climates
- Improve Assessment and Accountability
- Strengthen Family-School Partnerships
Addressing MCPS Priorities & Initiatives
A few examples...of how school psychologists enhance service delivery

- Monitor student progress
- Support classroom management
- Interventions

**CPS**

**Disproportionality**
- Tiered Service Delivery
- Accountability-Assess Evaluate
- Culture, language, and Learning style

**PBIS**
- Assess and assist with school-wide climate
- Support positive behavior
- FBA/BIP
MCPS Current Practice
Collaborative Problem Solving- CPS

PROBLEM SOLVING WITHIN A TIERED-SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

**Intervention**

Tier 3: Add Intensive Targeted Interventions
- More individualized
- Increased frequency and duration

Tier 2: Add Targeted Interventions
- Small groups/individuals
- Supplemental services

Tier 1: General Education Program
- All students
- Preventive, proactive

**Consultation**

Tier 3
1–5%

Tier 2
5–10%

Tier 1
80–90%

Students

EMT
Grade-Level or Content Team
Teacher/Parent or Teacher/Teacher
Three-Tiered Model for Prevention and Intervention: Behavior Supports Academics

**Academic Systems**

**Tier 3:**
*Intensive Interventions*
- Small groups/individual students
- Reduce complexity and severity of academic problems

**Tier 2:**
*Targeted Interventions*
- Groups of students/at risk
- Reduce academic problems

**Tier 1:**
*Universal Interventions*
- All settings, all students
- Prevent academic problems

**Behavioral Systems**

**Tier 3:**
*Intensive Interventions*
- Small groups/individual students
- Reduce complexity and severity of behavior problems

**Tier 2:**
*Targeted Interventions*
- Groups of students/at risk
- Reduce behavior problems

**Tier 1:**
*Universal Interventions*
- All settings, all students
- Prevent behavior problems

Adapted from PBIS
MCPS Problem Solving Framework
Draft from Disproportionality Project Team

1. Plan - What’s the problem?

2. Do: Problem Analysis - ID & Implement Intervention

3. Study: Intervention Design/Implementation - What is rate of progress? Is intervention effective?

4. ACT: Continue, modify, change intervention - Is it working?

Tier I

Tier II

Tier III
School Psychologists

A Wise Investment

✓ We are a ready resource
✓ We serve in every school
✓ We have facilitative skills and expertise
✓ We assess current practice
✓ We serve as coaches/trainers
✓ We are academic/behavioral consultants
✓ We are intervention specialists
✓ We help staff to best support students
✓ We enhance the learning and mental health of all students
Executive Summary

The demand for preventative services that support general education interventions has increased considerably. Increasing academic achievement and ensuring the attainment of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), decreasing incidents of bullying, developing gang abatement programs, improving social skills, implementing problem-solving approaches, improving attendance rates, reducing truancy, and reducing the disproportional representation of African-American students who are suspended and/or who are in specific special education categories are desired outcomes reflected in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Strategic Plan. These needs impact the current workload of pupil personnel workers (PPWs) and school psychologists.

When student services staff are available for problem solving, direct interventions, social skills approaches, and positive behavior interventions and supports; national research reveals improved student behavior and achievement. Problem solving, response to intervention practices, and other models of intervention and prevention are key features of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). Federal legislation implies that staffing capacity is an essential factor in reaching desired student outcomes.

This report provides an update on the current status of PPW and school psychologists staffing in MCPS, includes best practice information from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the Maryland Association for Pupil Personnel (MAPP), and it provides staffing comparison data surrounding school systems. The report also includes a three year staffing plan proposal.

Statement of Purpose

The mission of the Department of Student Services is to optimize the educational experience for every student. In order to achieve this mission, it is important to build staffing capacity that allows for meaningful and effective service to students. Student Services promotes school environments that support physically and mentally healthy youth and provides the maximum opportunities for all students to learn successfully.

Current Status
The current MCPS staffing allocation (when considering the entire cohort of school psychologists) provides one school psychologist per 1,343 students. But not all school psychologists are directly assigned to schools. Of the 102 school psychologists in MCPS, 22 (22 percent) are assigned to critical need areas – working in programs that support students that are not English language proficient, students with specific special education needs, and our youngest and most vulnerable students in Head Start. When school psychologists working in special and alternative programs are removed from the ratio of school psychologists to students, the ratio increases to one field office based school psychologist per 2,045 students. *NASP and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) recommends that the ratio of school psychologists to students be no greater than 1 school psychologist for every 1,000 students.*

The following chart provides comparison information for school psychologist staffing for MCPS and other local Maryland and Virginia school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th># Psychologists</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Arundel</td>
<td>74000</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1 : 1121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>164295</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1 : 1067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>48444</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1 : 723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>137007</td>
<td>102 (all FTE)</td>
<td>1 : 1343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66.5 (field office-based psychologists only)</td>
<td>1 : 2060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the public schools systems in Howard, Anne Arundel, and Fairfax Counties, the average school psychologist has no more than a two school assignment. In MCPS, most school psychologists have an assignment of three to four schools.

The current MCPS staffing allocation provides one PPW for every 2,978 students. The following chart provides comparison information for PPW staffing for MCPS and other local Maryland and Virginia school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th># Pupil Personnel Workers</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>164295</td>
<td>124 (social workers)</td>
<td>1 : 1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>48444</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 : 2422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>137007</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1 : 2978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George’s</td>
<td>134000</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1 : 1276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MCPS has the largest PPW to student ratio in the Metro area. MAPP, created by MSDE in 1955, recommends a ratio of 1 PPW for every 2,000 students in its document, *MAPP Position Statement Pupil Personnel Worker-Student Ratio.*

Efficient sustainable implementation of school system initiatives and priorities such as, the Collaborative Action Process (CAP), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), emerging Response to Intervention (RtI) practices, Grade 8 Residency Verification Initiative,
gang prevention and intervention, and disproportionality will not be accomplished without direct proportional changes in the current MCPS staffing allocations.

**Issues and Recommendations**

Issue 1. With increased staffing, PPWs and school psychologists could more effectively continue to increase their participation in system initiatives and priorities which focus on problem solving, prevention, and early intervention. In order to fulfill the role and function of student services support to schools and to effectively improve the learning environment and remove barriers to academic success for all students the number of PPWs and school psychologists must be increased.

Given the current staffing allocation, the opening of six new schools over the past two years, and the competing tasks of residency verification, truancy, immunization compliance, the suspension/expulsion process, and the change of school assignment requests, PPWs are less available to participate in preventative problem solving activities such as, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), the Collaborative Action Process (CAP), and emerging RtI practices. The current allocation of school psychologists has resulted in assignments on average of 3–4 schools.

A full complement of school psychologists and PPWs, as recommended by the 2001 MCPS budget initiative, will enable the following desired outcomes:

- Improve and increase general education prevention and early intervention activities,
- Increase the implementation of problem solving, social skills approaches, and positive behavior supports and interventions,
- Support reading and math interventions,
- Enhance achievement and support gains in AYP,
- Support the inclusion of special education students within the general education classroom, and simultaneously
- Meet the needs of our most vulnerable students, specifically those that exhibit complex special education needs, are learning a new language, or for who benefit from alternative education settings,
- Improve the ability of MCPS to compete with neighboring school districts for highly qualified trained school psychologists and school psychologist interns.

**Recommendation** – The PPW to student ratio must be no greater than 1:2000. With this ratio, 73 PPWs would be needed to serve the current student population. This would be an increase of 27 positions. The school psychologist to student ratio must be no greater that 1:1000. With this ratio, 147 school psychologists would be needed to serve the current student population. This would be an increase of 43 positions. A plan to phase in additional PPW and school psychologist positions over the next three years should be developed.

Issue 2. Maintain comprehensive pupil personnel services and school psychological service delivery in the future.
By the 2012, MCPS is forecasting that 204 schools will be in operation. PPW and school psychologists must be part of the “base staffing” when new schools open. The services that PPWs and school psychologists provide are school based. Currently, each PPW is assigned to 4 to 6 schools and each field office based school psychologist is assigned to 2 to 4 schools. At each school in their assignment, they participate in school EMT or CAP meetings, IEP team meetings, School Assistance Team meetings. Many have a leadership role in the implementation of PBIS and CAP and thus are responsible for attending school meetings for each of those programs. Each PPW and school psychologist meets with students (and when appropriate their families), counselors, administrators, and other school staff as well as county and non-profit/private service providers on a regular basis at each assigned school.

The number of schools assigned to each PPW or school psychologist has a great impact on service delivery. For example, if a PPW or school psychologist has an assignment of one school of 1000 students, that person will deliver direct services to 1000 students and their families as well as participate in that school’s meetings. Typical meetings include EMT/CAP, IEP, PBIS, School Assistance Team, as well as any other meetings that principals directs their student services staff members to attend. However, if a PPW or school psychologist has an assignment of two schools of 500 students each, the job is not the same. Yes, the person will deliver direct services to 1000 students and their families; but that person participates in two sets of school meetings; doubling the meetings that a PPW or school psychologist is expected to attend greatly impacts time available for direct prevention and intervention services. When this is put into the perspective of 4 – 6 school assignments for PPWs and 3 – 4 school assignments for school psychologists, the impact is dramatic.

The Department of Student Services surveyed principals during the Spring of 2006. Of the many roles PPWs and school psychologists perform, administrators ranked collaborative problem solving, direct services, consultation with teachers, and consultations with parents as the most important. Consistently, survey responses showed that school administrators value the work of PPWs and school psychologists. From that survey, the majority of administrators responded that they would like their PPW and school psychologists to be assigned additional time in their school building to be able to increase direct services, such as individual and small group work with students, consultation with parents, and teachers, and parent/community workshops.

The survey also included the opportunity for school administrators to provide comments regarding students services. The vast majority of the comments spoke to the need for additional time for student services staff. School administrator comments included:

- “We are in dire need of more wrap-around services.”
- “PPWs caseload does not allow sufficient participation with our intervention team.”
- “We have very capable people in both our PPW and psychologist positions. They do great work and we would benefit from any additional time they could devote here.”
- “The PPW and school psychologist are spread too thinly among their schools.”
- “Give us more time with psychologists and PPW services.”

Recommendation - School Psychologists and Pupil Personnel Worker positions must be included in the base staffing formula used when new schools are opened.

The current cadre of veteran school psychologists is reaching retirement age. Nationally, there is a shortage of qualified school psychologists to take their place. For the last several years, many school psychologist interns and many recently hired school psychologists have been leaving MCPS for other area school systems that assign school psychologists to fewer schools and in which the workload is utilizing their entire breadth of skills. If this trend continues and the expected school psychologist retirements occur, MCPS will face a critical shortage which will significantly impact our ability to provide student services support to school.

Recommendation - Continue to actively recruit and train school psychology interns and offer them open contracts, when appropriate, as early as possible.

Issue 4. PPWs conduct approximately 900 home schooling reviews each semester, for an annual total of 1,800 reviews. Spending on average one hour per review, PPWs spend 1,800 hours each school year on a task that is not connected to students who are enrolled in MCPS.

PPWs, as advocates for our most at-risk students and their families, should be engaged in activities, services, and interventions that remove barriers for students who are enrolled in MCPS and are at-risk of underperforming. Activities and services provided to students who are not enrolled in MCPS should be outsourced so that PPWs can become more involved in prevention and early intervention activities for MCPS students. Increasing the amount of time PPWs are available to provide direct support to students, families, and school staffs contributes to the well being and academic success of every student.

Recommendation - Home schooling reviews should be outsourced to private contractors.

Conclusion

National research documents that improved student behavior and achievement occurs when student services staff are available for problem solving as well as instructional and behavioral consultation. Both the NCLB legislation and IDEA strongly support problem solving and early intervention. Adequate student services staffing is among those factors considered essential in reaching desired student outcomes.

According to statistics from the Montgomery Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families (Montgomery County’s Local Management Board), the number of children needing intensive mental health services has increased substantially. During the current year 347 children were referred and approved for intensive “wrap-around” services. Most of these children are also students in MCPS. Increasing the cohort of student services staff will benefit the efforts of the Collaboration Council and provide effective intervention services for these highly impacted MCPS students.
In 2001, MCPS developed a four-year school psychologist's budget initiative to add school psychologists over several years, but FY 2001 was the only year that initiative was fully implemented. There has been no initiative to date to increase PPW staffing. The 2005 MCPS Mental Health Task Force recommended a full continuum of school mental health programs and suggested that mental health services can only occur if effective student services staffing ratios are reached.

By 2012, MCPS is forecasting that 204 schools will be in operation. MCPS would be well served to increase the current level of student service staffing thus reducing the number of schools assigned to each PPW and field office based school psychologist. These reduced school assignments will allow for increased time and increased service to students and their families and to school staffs.

It is obvious that hiring additional staff positions to achieve the staffing ratios recommended by NASP and MAPP would have a great financial impact on the school system. With this in mind, the recommendation is to increase the number of PPWs by 9 over the next 3 years and to increase the number of school psychologists by 14 over the next 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>MCPS Enrollment Forecast</th>
<th>Number of School Projected</th>
<th>Additional PPW Positions</th>
<th>Resulting PPW to Student Ratio</th>
<th>Additional School Psychologists Positions</th>
<th>Resulting School Psychologist to Student Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>136258</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5 (51)</td>
<td>1 : 2672</td>
<td>8 (74.5)</td>
<td>(all FTE) 1 : 1239 (field office) 1 : 1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>136603</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>5 (56)</td>
<td>1 : 2439</td>
<td>7 (81.5)</td>
<td>(all FTE) 1 : 1168 (field office) 1 : 1676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2011</td>
<td>137168</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4 (60)</td>
<td>1 : 2286</td>
<td>7 (88.5)</td>
<td>(all FTE) 1 : 1106 (field office) 1 : 1550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This staffing increase would have a positive impact on the ability for PPWs and school psychologists to be available for increased time for direct services to students and families and to school staffs. It would also make progress in bringing MCPS closer to the service ratios recommended by MAPP and NASP.