



DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS MANAGEMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

### **INNOVATION SUMMARY: Editorial Help Desk**

*Development and maintenance of a resource for school and central services support staff involved in generating correspondence and other documents with various MCPS stakeholders.*

**PROBLEM:** With 204 schools and many central services departments, the number of MCPS employees who write correspondence, evaluations, and other documents lies in the hundreds; and the breadth of that work is formidable. Grammar and writing-style standards were inconsistent, which adversely affected the perception of MCPS as a credible organization of educators.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:** The best solution to serve this systemwide need is to develop and execute a strategic plan to do the following:

Develop event and training opportunities to share information on grammar and style best practices with groups of employees.

Make available the reference tools that employees need to do their jobs better.

Provide a system to address individual inquiries on grammar and word usage and editorial issues.

**TECHNICAL CHALLENGES:** The main challenge is how to have a significant effect on hundreds of employees; also, how best (with a team of 1.5 FTE) to let employees know that helpful resources are available to them.

**APPLIED INNOVATION:** The following innovative tools are being applied to affect a large audience of users:

1. We have developed an authority website with branded resources, including the following:
  - Tip of the Month and special topic forum
  - Interactive versions of the *MCPS Correspondence Manual*, *MCPS Acronyms*, and the *MCPS Editorial Stylebook*
  - Helpful links for writers
  - Answers to frequently asked questions

Resources like Tip of the Month help users remember the source and return to it regularly for more information.

2. We host a biannual event to bring the community of users together to share and learn from invited speakers, who share their expertise and encourage the participants to do their best work.
3. We update and provide the *MCPS Correspondence Manual*, *MCPS Acronyms*, and the *MCPS Editorial Stylebook* for staff development classes, and for individual use.

**RESULTS:** In FY 2003, when the Editorial Help Desk started, we responded to 49 phone and e-mail inquiries for the fiscal year. The website has almost 6,000 visits in FY 2016.