

Impact of Services Provided by School Well-Being Social Workers 2023–2024

Recommendation 1: Examine the fiscal feasibility of increasing WBSW positions to support more schools.

Opinion	Responsive Action Plan (Provide Narrative Response)	Status of Responsive Action	Estimated Date of Full Implementation of Responsive Action
Disagree	<p>Although having 1:1 WBSW for every school (211) would be optimal, our current focus for growth and sustainability does not include a significant expansion at this time. When the team was first conceived and under ESSER funding, the total number of WBSWs included 32 (one per high school, Edison, and six centrally based WBSWs) and one supervisor. Since 2022, the team has expanded to 43 WBSWs (one per high school, Edison, ten centrally based, and seven assigned to middle schools) and one supervisor.</p> <p>As the WBSW team has grown, our goal is to ensure the current positions are best aligned with other mental health positions within MCPS (ex: school counselor and school psychologist), all Student Well-Being Teams, and our external providers (ex: Bridge to Wellness, Linkages to Learning, Wellness Centers, JSSA, Thrive). With this alignment, the WBSW will be able to collaboratively provide targeted support to meet the multi-layered needs of students, schools, staff, and families. While we have made significant gains at alignment, this work is ongoing.</p> <p>With regard to the increased presence of WBSWs at their focus schools, the weekly PLC schedule has been adjusted and refined for</p>	Implemented	8/21/2024

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	<p>the 2024–2025 school year. WBSWs will be expected to attend PLC three times per month, compared to the previous four. This will permit the WBSW to report to their focus school one additional day monthly. Attendance at PLC not only offers the opportunity for WBSWs to collaborate with their colleagues but also affords a space for clinical supervision to yield quality service delivery from each WBSW.</p> <p>Finally, I am pleased to share that in June 2024, the Board approved WBSWs to be moved from ESSER funding to the MCPS local budget. Our office will continue to advocate for a budget that will support the current implementation level while continuously examining impact data so that expansion can happen when it is fiscally available.</p>		
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Recommendation 2: Identify and share guidance on ways to address the gap in WBSW support services for students, especially for students with IEPs.

Opinion	Responsive Action Plan (Provide Narrative Response)	Status of Responsive Action	Estimated Date of Full Implementation of Responsive Action
Disagree	<p>While this evaluation was conducted on the WBSWs, it did not include findings or evaluation of the social workers housed within the Department of Special Education. There are approximately 85 school social workers, as identified and certified by MSDE, employed by MCPS. Of these, approximately 30 are funded through special education, and it is their sole responsibility to provide related services for students, as determined by their IEP. Additionally, three school social workers are under alternative programs, and six are under Title I/Head Start. Each area serves a specific population, leaving the large general education population without supports. At their conception, WBSWs were created to primarily serve those who would not otherwise receive supports, or may have been overlooked.</p> <p>In the evaluation report, it was noted that there are students who do not meet the criteria for social-emotional supports through special education yet had an IEP for other needs that were not served by a WBSW. The WBSW supervisor has collaborated (ongoing) with leadership within special education to problem-solve and identify best practices for supporting and meeting the needs of all students. It was determined</p>	Implemented	8/21/2024

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	<p>that the WBSWs already support students with IEPs in various ways. All WBSWs hold “office hours” where any student, regardless of ability/diagnosis, can walk in for support (brief interventions/not ongoing). Secondly, if there is a student who has an IEP for reasons other than social-emotional needs and is in need of mental health supports, the student’s IEP team must practice their due diligence in ruling out the student’s current need for social emotional support is not a result of their disability. If, after the IEP team convenes and formally determines the student’s needs are not an educational disability, then the WBSW may add that student to their individual caseload for 1:1 or group supports. Additionally, if that student needs brief supports, such as grief counseling, that student may receive those services from the WBSW, as they are not directly related to the student’s IEP.</p>		
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Recommendation 3: Strengthen the communication regarding services available by WBSWs and create intentional mechanisms for ongoing communication between WBSWs and school administrators.

Opinion	Responsive Action Plan (Provide Narrative Response)	Status of Responsive Action	Estimated Date of Full Implementation of Responsive Action
Concur	<p>It is agreed that communication between all stakeholders can be strengthened. Historically, as part of the onboarding for each WBSW, virtual or in-person meetings were held with school administration and Resource Counselors, along with the WBSW and WBSW leadership. Each WBSW has been encouraged to request regular meetings (1–2 times/month) with their school administration to increase transparency, foster collaboration, and build a symbiotic trusting relationship. However, as this is a suggestion and not a directive (the WBSW supervisor cannot give a directive to school administration to comply with this suggestion), not all school administration initially saw the necessity or benefit of this process.</p> <p>During the summer of 2024, email communication was sent to all 51 administrators who have a WBSW to request a “Reflection/Goal Setting” meeting. As of 8/21/24, 36 schools have either met or scheduled a meeting with the WBSW supervisor. During this meeting, administrators had an opportunity to highlight areas of their WBSW impact and/or share areas for growth. At this time, clarification was provided on areas, outside of 1:1 services, that the WBSW may be a resource to the school, such as</p>	Partially Implemented	6/20/2025

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	<p>Tier 1/2 supports (staff PL, parent/community outreach, schoolwide initiatives). Additionally, all administrators were encouraged to meet regularly with their WBSW (for the above reasons).</p> <p>Finally, the WBSW provided multiple modalities for administrators to contact, should support be needed – or for general questions. The WBSW supervisor will conduct these check-ins on a semester basis, or more frequently if needed.</p> <p>This increase in communication will be ongoing. </p>		
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Recommendation 4: Explore options to strengthen the methods for monitoring student progress.

Opinion	Responsive Action Plan (Provide Narrative Response)	Status of Responsive Action	Estimated Date of Full Implementation of Responsive Action
Concur	<p>Universally, measuring and monitoring student progress is complex and nearly impossible. Each student has their own individualized plan to meet their complex needs – this plan is developed in collaboration with the student, the WBSW, and the parent/guardian. This year, the Social Worker Activity Log Portal (SWALP) was created in response to monitoring types of sessions, frequency, and length. Additionally, the tool for student feedback, “Pre/Post Intervention Survey,” has been enhanced and will be distributed to each WBSW at the start of the 2024–2025 SY. This tool is a self-made tool and is informal/unofficial. To use this tool, each student will complete the survey at the start of their time working with the WBSW and again within an 8–12 session window. The MTSS system within Synergy and teacher and parent feedback are additional measures used to gauge progress. WBSWs also have used attendance, behavior, and grade data to evaluate student progress. However, it is important to note that several factors can impact the above data points.</p> <p>Finally, student progress during a counseling session may not always appear as progress. For example, a student who has a complex history of trauma may make progress discussing and exploring the impact of their trauma. In doing so, this also may</p>	Partially Implemented	June 20, 2024 - ongoing

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	<p>cause the student to display avoidant behaviors, such as not coming to school and/or acting out, as the resurfacing and addressing significant issues may be emotionally unsettling, and students may not yet have the tools to fully process what they are experiencing.</p> <p>WBSWs have access to group and individual clinical supervision/consultation weekly via PLC (and as needed for individual) to discuss student progress and explore factors that may impact.</p>		
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