

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

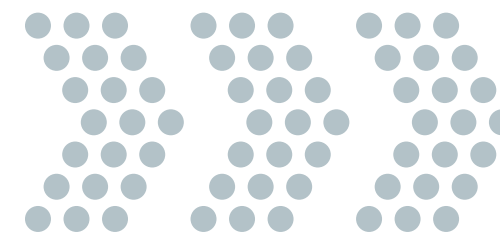
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	Executive Summary.....1
	Program Description..... 3
	Evaluation Scope..... 4
	Methods..... 5
	Results 7
	Conclusion..... 46
	References..... 52

Impact of Services Provided by Well-Being Social Workers



Executive Summary

Evaluation Scope

This evaluation assessed the impact of the supports provided by the The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funded School Well-Being Social Workers (WBSWs), managed under the Office of School Support and Well-Being, during the 2023–2024 school year. The evaluation primarily focused on 21 middle and 26 high schools with a dedicated on-site WBSW, referred to as focus schools, while also examining the request process for WBSW consult or services in the remaining MCPS non-focus schools (136 elementary and 19 middle schools) to assure all schools are aware they have access to supports provided by WBSWs.

Methods

A non-experimental mixed method design was employed to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the supports and services provided by WBSWs and their impact on students and the school environment. This study included small group interviews with principals from high schools and middle schools with an on-site WBSW (40% response rate). Additionally, surveys were administered to WBSWs (71% response rate), and secondary School Well-Being Team (SWBT) staff, including Bridge to Wellness staff in high schools (55% response rate). Surveys were also administered to principals and counselors at elementary schools and non-focus middle schools (37% response rate), concentrating on their experience with the request process for WBSW consultation and services.

Results

WBSWs provided a range of services to both students and staff. According to principals and SWBT staff in focus schools, WBSWs delivered direct therapeutic services to individual students, especially those who had critical needs (i.e., Tier 3 support) and students in crisis. Principals in small group interviews reported that the WBSWs' qualifications and expertise uniquely positioned them to provide Tier 3 supports and mental health care. It also was reported that WBSWs met with students in group settings, connected with students, and built relationships with families while connecting them to needed resources. Nearly all SWBT staff who completed the survey reported that collaboration with staff worked well (93%), and 95% agreed that the WBSW was viewed as part of the school community, which coincided with feedback received from principals. Most SWBT staff who completed the survey agreed that they understood the role of the WBSW (91%) and the differences with other members of the SWBT (88%).

Throughout the small group interviews, principal participants were very positive about services provided by WBSWs, declaring them invaluable and essential. They strongly advocated for not only maintaining the position, but increasing them. All (100%) participating principals rated the presence of a WBSW at their school as important, with 17 of 19 rating them as extremely important. Similarly, nearly all SWBT staff who completed the survey (97%) reported it was extremely (83%) or very important (14%) to keep a WBSW in their school, and 95% agreed WBSWs provided important services.

Impact of Services Provided by Well-Being Social Workers



Executive Summary

Results

Principals who were interviewed and SWBT staff who responded to the survey highlighted several areas they believed were positively impacted by the services provided by WBSWs. These included providing essential services and supports to students, particularly Tier 3 services; alleviating the workload of counselors; positively influencing students' overall well-being and attendance among students served; and contributing to a positive school climate. Nearly all SWBT staff who responded to the survey agreed that services provided by WBSWs had a positive impact on student well-being (93%), school climate (92%), and student behavior (87%). Overall, the biggest challenge staff reported was the limited availability of WBSWs due to their schedules and the high demand for their services; this was a sentiment also reported by WBSWs. Middle school staff would like a WBSW at their school more often than twice a week, and high school staff would like more WBSWs. Another challenge raised by staff was the perception of limited access that students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), who also need WBSW support, have to WBSWs and the need to fill this gap in services. About one third of surveyed WBSWs (31% of middle and 38% of high school) indicated their case load was too much. Most WBSWs reported that collaboration with their schools' SWBT and the use of the Social Worker Activity Log Portal (SWALP) (90%) worked well. However, challenges included a need for a better system to monitor student progress. Just over half (56%) reported that the process for monitoring student progress worked well and one-third reported the pre-post student intervention tool worked well.

Elementary schools and non-focus middle schools also have access to WBSWs and may submit a request for a consultation or services. Data records showed there were 151 requests submitted from 87 schools for services provided by WBSWs this year (56% of all non-focus schools). A large majority of the requests were for a consultation regarding a student (81%) and were from elementary schools (76%). Only 30% of principal and counselor survey respondents from elementary and non-focus middle schools were aware they had access to services provided by WBSWs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings from this evaluation reflect positive feedback from staff on the impact on students and support the need for continuation of the WBSW position. However, challenges experienced by staff, including the WBSWs, indicate that implementation adjustments may be needed to ensure optimum use of those who serve as WBSWs to support schools. The following recommendations aim to optimize the implementation of services and support from WBSWs and to enhance program improvement. They include: 1) examine the fiscal feasibility of increasing WBSW positions to support more schools; 2) identify and share guidance on ways to address the gap in WBSW support and services for students, especially for students with IEPs; 3) strengthen the communication regarding services available by WBSWs and create intentional mechanisms for ongoing communication between WBSWs and school administrators; and 4) explore options to strengthen the methods for monitoring student progress.



Program Description

Overview

Well-Being Social Workers (WBSWs) were put into place to provide equitable access to social, emotional, and mental health supports through collaboration with school and community partners, while promoting the academic and personal success of all students and families (MCPS, 2023a). During the 2021–2022 school year, MCPS used The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to address mental health needs of the school community and hired school-based WBSWs to support students’ mental health and well-being through direct therapeutic services, largely in response to the social-emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program included year-round school WBSW positions, a series of professional learning opportunities, and approved data tools for tracking and monitoring student progress. By the end of July 2022, MCPS hired 33 WBSWs and a supervisor (MCPS, 2022a). An additional ten positions were created during 2022–2023, bringing the total to 43 WBSWs. Two of the WBSW positions remained vacant until July 1, 2024. Forty-seven secondary schools received dedicated on-site support from an assigned WBSW (referred to as focus schools), with high schools receiving support four times a week and middle schools, plus Thomas Edison High School of Technology, receiving support twice a week. The WBSWs with focus schools, maintained an ongoing student caseload and collaborated closely with their School Well-Being Team (SWBT) and Bridge to Wellness staff (high schools only). Ten of the WBSWs who were assigned one focus middle school twice a week, also provided consultation upon request to all elementary schools, special schools, and the remaining middle schools within their assigned clusters. These ten WBSWs also worked in teams alongside a Restorative Justice (RJ) Specialist to provide cluster support.

Program Components



47 Schools with on-site WBSWs (focus schools)

25 High Schools have an on-site WBSW 4 times a week.

- All were in Year 2 (2023–2024) of receiving a dedicated WBSW.

21 Middle Schools and Thomas Edison High School of Technology each have an on-site WBSW 2 times a week.

- Nine were in Year 2 (2023–2024) of receiving an on-site WBSW.



19 Middle Schools and 136 Elementary Schools, and special schools, without an onsite WBSW (non-focus schools), can request a WBSW consult and services:

- WBSWs responded to requests from assigned clusters, often working alongside an RJ Specialist as part of a trio support team.

WBSW allocation during 2023–2024:

- 26 WBSWs were assigned a high school 4 times a week (one WBSW was split between Thomas Edison High School of Technology and a middle school).
- 5 WBSWs were assigned to two middle schools, each twice a week.
- 10 WBSWs were assigned to one middle school twice a week and supported elementary and remaining middle schools in their assigned cluster upon request.

WBSWs provided the following tiered services to focus and non-focus schools:



Tier 1: Services provided to the whole school such as: classroom lessons, walk-in office hours, parent outreach and education, crisis response support, and staff professional development.



Tier 2: Services provided to small groups of students.



Tier 3: Services provided one-on-one with individual students such as counseling and crisis intervention.



As a result of the growing mental health needs that emerged after COVID-19, MCPS used ESSER funds to create and staff a WBSW Unit to expand social and emotional services to all students. This evaluation examined the supports provided by WBSWs to schools and their perceived impacts during the 2023–2024 school year. The primary focus of this evaluation was on middle and high schools with an on-site school WBSW. However, the request process to receive a consultation or support provided by a WBSW, among non-focus schools, also was examined. It also is important to note that the scope of this evaluation includes the WBSWs under the Office of School Support and Well-Being, and it does not include the social workers who serve students receiving Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES) under The Office of Special Education.

Purpose of Evaluation



To examine the impact of the supports provided by the ESSER-Funded school Well-Being Social Workers (WBSWs) during the 2023–2024 school year.

Research Questions

- 1 What services and supports did WBSWs provide to secondary school staff and students?
- 2 What were the perceptions and experiences of middle and high school principals regarding the tiered services provided by WBSWs, whether students' needs were met, and their impact on student well-being?
- 3 What were the perceptions and experiences of School Well-Being Team (SWBT) staff and Bridge to Wellness staff regarding the referral process, the tiered services provided by WBSWs, whether students' needs were met, and the impact on student well-being?
- 4 What were the perceptions and experiences of WBSWs with the tiered services they provided, the professional learning opportunities (PLO) they provided, the referral process, and tools provided by MCPS for tracking and monitoring student progress?
- 5 What were the experiences of elementary and middle school staff in non-focus schools regarding the process for requesting WBSW consultation and services?



A non-experimental mixed methods design was used to understand the experiences and perceptions of the supports and services provided by WBSWs and the perceived impact they had on students and the school environment. To gather this information, small group interviews were conducted with principals of high schools and middle schools with a dedicated on-site WBSW. Additionally, surveys were administered to WBSWs and to SWBT staff in focus schools at the middle and high school levels. Furthermore, surveys were administered to principals, resource counselors, and counselors at elementary schools and middle schools in non-focus schools, regarding their experience with the process for requesting WBSWs consultation or services.

Implementation Methods



Data Measures & Sample

- Small group interviews with up to three participants, were conducted with middle and high school principals that have a dedicated on-site WBSW.
- Online surveys were administered to:
 - All WBSWs
 - Middle and High School SWBT staff among focus schools (some schools in Year 1 and some in Year 2 for 2023–2024)
 - High School Bridge to Wellness staff.
 - All elementary principals and counselors, and middle school principals and resource counselors among non-focus schools.
- A data file of requests for WBSW consultations and services from non-focus schools for the 2023–2024 school year.



Response Rates

Principal Small Group Interviews: 2-3 per group (N = 19, 40% response rate)

- 11 of 26 invited high school principals participated.
- 8 of 22 invited middle school principals participated.
- 4 of the 8 middle schools were in Year 1 of having a dedicated WBSW during 2023–2024, and 4 schools were Year 2.

SWBT Survey (64 respondents out of 117, 55% response rate)

- 30% of respondents were at the middle school level.
- 70% of respondents were at the high school level.
- Respondent titles: 22% school administrator, 33% resource counselor, 28% pupil personnel worker (PPW), 14% Bridge to Wellness staff, 3% other.

**Note: SWBT respondents throughout this report include Bridge to Wellness staff*

WBSW Survey (29 respondents out of 41, 71% response rate)

- 52% of respondents were at one or two middle schools 2 days a week per school.
- 48% of respondents were at a high school 4 days a week.

Principals and Counselor Survey from Non-Focus Schools (115 respondents out of 311, 37% response rate)

- 89% of respondents were at the elementary school level, and 11% were at the middle school level.
- Respondent titles: 51% principals, 49% elementary counselors or middle school resource counselors.



Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze closed-ended survey responses.
- Content analysis was used to analyze small group interview findings and open-ended survey responses.
- A document review and descriptive statistics were used to examine requests for services provided by WBSWs from non-focus schools as of May 29, 2024 for the 2023–2024 school year.



Costs

Overall cost of 2023–2024 WBSWs

Approximately \$4,354,813

- Well-Being Social Workers and Supervisor: \$4,337,313
- Instructional Materials + Program Supplies*: \$17,500

*The total cost of instructional materials and supplies is shared with Restorative Justice. \$17,500 reflects half of the total cost.



Findings

The approximate annual cost of implementing supports provided by WBSWs is \$4.3 million. This includes 43 WBSWs and their supervisor, plus costs of materials and supplies shared with the implementation of Restorative Justice.

Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Overview

The following is an overview of findings from the principal small group interviews. The numbered themes, arranged by category, emerged from small group interviews with middle and high school principals about services provided by their WBSW. Additional detailed findings are in the following pages.

Importance and Positive Sentiment

- All 19 participating principals rated the services provided by their WBSW as important for their school; most (90%) gave a rating of extremely important.
- Strong positive sentiment and broad support for retaining the WBSW position was expressed.

Supports and Services Provided by WBSWs

1. Met 1:1 with students and especially worked with students who had critical needs.
2. Supported students on waitlists for services outside of school and with students during intake processes.
3. Supported students in small groups.
4. Built relationships with parents and families and connected them to resources.
5. Was part of the school community and collaborated with other school well-being staff.

Challenges

1. Not enough scheduled time at school/not enough WBSWs.
2. A gap in supports and services for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who are also in need of WBSW support.
3. WBSWs are central office staff vs. school staff (a challenge for some).

Impact

1. Avoided crisis, prevented conflict, and decreased suspendable behaviors.
2. Perceived positive impact on school climate and overall well-being, including students with anxiety and attendance issues.
3. Provided needed services to support students and relieve counselors.

What Worked Well

1. Had an expert beyond the school counselors and was a trusted adult.
2. Referral system.
3. Collaboration and communication with administration and staff.

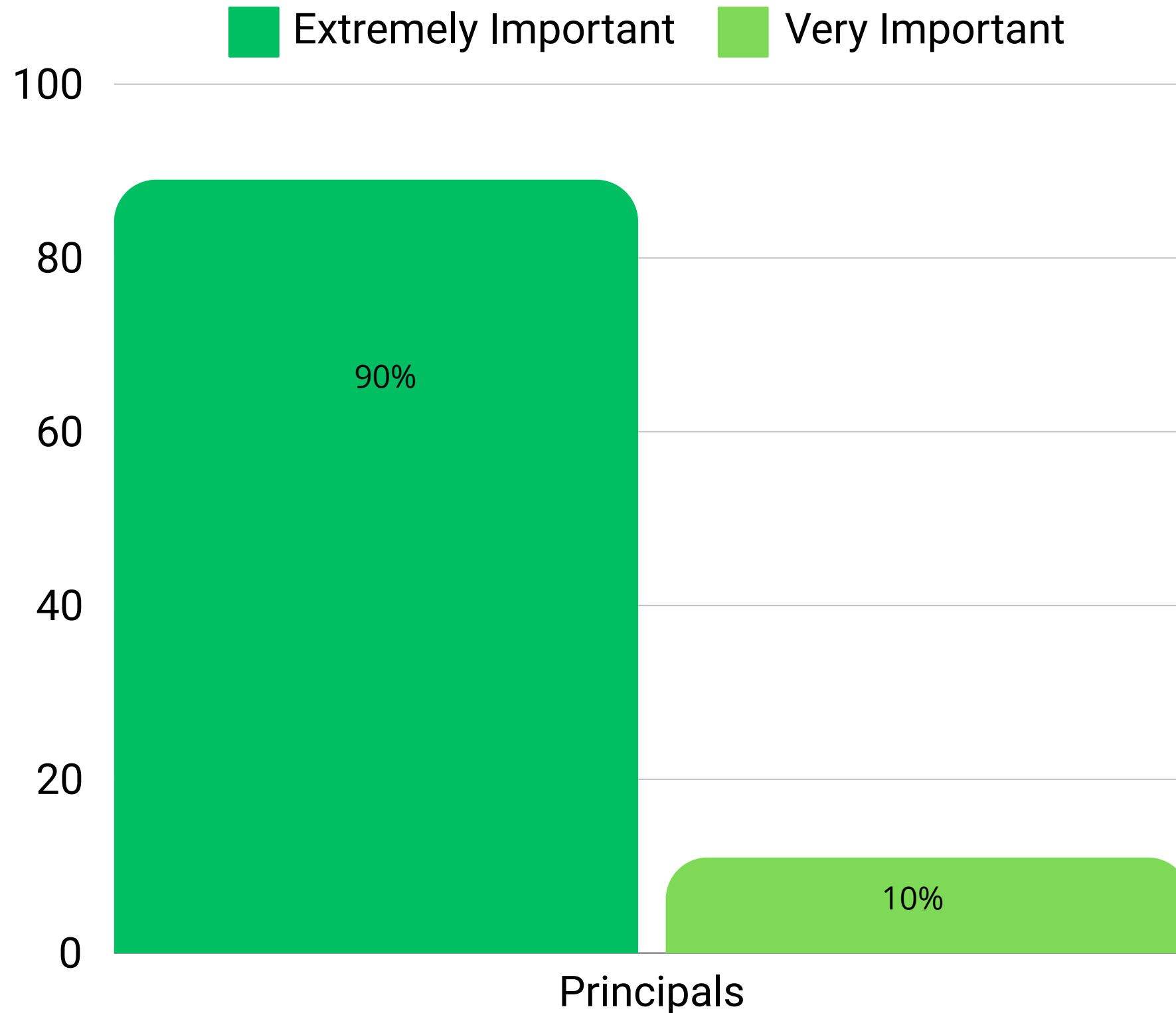
Suggestions

1. Increase the number of school WBSWs.
2. Share more information to school administrators on what services and supports WBSWs can provide.
3. Increase communication between WBSWs and their administration.
4. Reconsider the WBSW PLC schedule which removed them from schools one day a week.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Ratings of the importance of having a school WBSW



Findings

Importance: In small group interviews, principals were asked to rate the importance of having a WBSW at their school.

- All principals reported the services provided by the WBSW were important with most (17 of 19) responding “extremely important.”
- No principals gave a rating of “somewhat important”, “not very important”, or “not at all important.”



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Supports and services provided by WBSWs

“The most important service is providing ongoing therapy with students with critical needs, and supporting students with disciplinary issues.”

“Works with the highest tier, the most challenging students that the SWBT identifies. The WBSW is strongest with the more challenging cases - can give them more time, and more wrap around services than traditional counselors.”

“The WBSW takes on tough cases where individual therapy is needed: students who are homeless, run away, or where additional resources will benefit.”

“They are a resource we didn't have before, for really high need students. They can triage.”

“The WBSW is the main resource for tier 3 students - students with significant emotional mental health issues, attendance issues, and issues with substance abuse. [The WBSW] is phenomenal with unpacking the trauma of recent arrival students.”



Findings

The following themes emerged when principals were asked in **what ways** WBSWs served their school.

Theme 1: Met one-on-one with students and especially worked with students who had critical needs.

Principals often reported that the WBSW met with students with critical needs and navigated the tough cases (e.g., the highest tier level of support). They added that this is a **role no one else among school staff can provide**, and that the WBSW offers individual therapeutic services and can provide wrap around services. One principal remarked that this year their WBSW focused on the top 5% of students who needed well-being services, a very specific and impacted clientele. Another remarked that WBSWs were **the main resource for students who needed Tier 3 support**, which is provided one-on-one with individual students. The WBSW also was key in identifying and supporting mental illnesses.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Supports and services provided by WBSWs

“ There is a long list for outside services, so the WBSW can maintain the students until they can get to them. ”

“ The WBSW meets with students temporarily while they are waiting for outside services and their issues are piling up. [WBSW] can support them immediately. It is a good bridge to mental health services. ”

“ The WBSW has an intake meeting with students to determine what level support they need. They may also be in the intake meeting when a student returns from a suspension, to determine if additional supports are needed. ”

“ Will meet with students while there is a lag getting outside support services. The WBSW will problem solve to try and get them services. For example, may ask a student if they have a veteran parent [to get access to services]. ”



Findings

Theme 2: Supported students on waitlists for services outside of school and with students during intake processes.

- Students often faced long waitlists for services or supports, such as therapy, outside of MCPS. **WBSWs provided immediate support**, bridging the gap while they waited. Principals also noted that insurance was a barrier for some students seeking external services.
- The WBSW **may participate in intake meetings** to determine the level of support a student needs. WBSWs may also work with students returning from suspension as part of their intake process, though some principals reported this was only if the student was already part of the WBSW's caseload.

Theme 3: Supported students in small groups.

- The WBSWs also **met with groups of students**. For example, they worked with students involved in the same incident, facilitated a girls' club for students frequently in fights (along with their mothers), and supported students who were frequently suspended.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Supports and services provided by WBSWs

“ Our WBSW is bilingual, so not only understands the language, but the culture. Can communicate with parents who have a different attitude toward mental health. ”

“ The WBSW is instrumental in supporting and connecting with families in challenging situations. Understands parent challenges and addresses therapeutic needs. [The WBSW] really gets to know families and check in with them even after the student has moved on. ”

“ Our WBSW also connects with families, and oftentimes that is where a lot of the powerful work happens. Can have a conversation with parents from a more clinical approach, which as a school administrator, can be very hard to have a conversation. ”

“ Our WBSW works really well with families and connects them well with resources. Very helpful and keeps administrators and counselors looped in. ”



Findings

Theme 4: Built relationships with parents and families.

- WBSWs built relationships with parents/guardians and families, particularly of those students they were serving. For example, they **connected families to resources** such as mental health providers, referred them to the wellness center for wrap around services including medical care, provided consultation to families, and helped with transitions such as going to middle school. One principal remarked the WBSW was **instrumental in supporting families** and could really understand parents’ challenges in situations, such as going through an eviction. A WBSW may meet with parents/guardians when they are first referred to a student. Some reported that the **WBSW went on home visits** and worked hand-in-hand with the Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW), Parent Community Coordinator (PCC), or the school psychologist. Some principals also remarked how important it was that their **WBSW was bilingual** to communicate effectively with families and understand the culture. To some families, the WBSW was an adult they trusted more than an outside mental health professional.
- The WBSW also was typically introduced at their school’s Back to School Night and **many attended family school events** (e.g., PTA meetings, International night, etc.) to connect with families.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Supports and services provided by WBSWs

“By proving support, the SW helps staff’s mental health too because counselors are overburdened. Helped support staff after a stressful incident.”

“The WBSW and RJ are naturally connecting and supporting each other because they go hand-in-hand. They decide whether to have a mediation with the other student involved in an incident. They are consistently having meetings with each other.”

“For years we have heard an outcry from counselors who are continuously overwhelmed with trying to get students through a challenging college process while explaining their case manager roles and 504 plan responsibilities. So the WBSW was in fact a resource that helps in that regard because counselors are not as available as they used to be to help students with social emotional issues.”

“The WBSW is so front and center and just part of the staff, but from a different lens. I think that’s gone a long way with our staff.”

“[The WBSW is] such a part of the staff and fully immersed in the school community. Attended International Night, school plays, and other events. Not seen as an outsider.”



Findings

Theme 5: Was part of the school community and collaborated with other school well-being staff.

- According to principals, WBSWs were an **integral and active part of the SWBT**, worked hand-in-hand with the wellness staff, was a member of the behavior assessment team, the crisis management team, and in some cases the attendance monitoring team.
- WBSWs especially **collaborated with school counselors** and were frequently seen as part of the team. They also collaborated closely with Bridge to Wellness staff, and some worked closely with the school PPW, PCC, psychologist, and Social Emotional Special Education (SESES) social worker.
- They **worked collaboratively with the RJ staff**, frequently supporting the RJ coaches and supporting professional learning. Some participated in RJ circles and mediation.
- Principals reported that their WBSW was seen as part of the school staff and school community, adding that their WBSW attended school events to make connections.
- Examples were given of WBSWs providing **staff support during a school crisis**, providing guidance with managing difficult situations, and being a thought partner with staff.
- Some principals shared that their WBSW provided professional learning to staff on topics such as responding to student varying needs, trauma informed practices, and staff and student self-regulation. However, some principals revealed that they were **not aware the WBSW role could provide professional learning to staff.**



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Impacts from services and supports provided by WBSWs

“The WBSW has avoided issues such as suicide risks because of [the WBSW’s] connection and students’ willingness to share when a friend is in danger. There is a decrease in crisis referrals.”

“Student conflicts are down drastically from prior years, Some students who wanted to react with fighting or have blow ups with staff, and are part of the WBSW’s caseload, are down. Being able to provide supports throughout the day where as before some things would have completely debilitated the students’ ability to re-engage.”

“I attribute a lot of the discipline issues moving in the right direction to the WBSW. Check-ins for Tier 2 and 3 students allow for a decrease in suspendable behaviors.”

“The impact is huge with just two days a week. WBSWs are the number one most effective intervention for student behavior causing interruptions and impacting academics.”

“The WBSW has helped some students process what’s going on in their lives and provide some preventative maintenance.”



Findings

The following themes emerged when principals were asked how services provided by WBSWs **impacted** their school.

Theme 1: Avoided crisis, prevented conflict, and decreased suspendible behaviors.

Principals reported that the WBSW was **instrumental in averting crises** (e.g., suicide, drug overdose). For example, by providing a safe environment for friends to report when someone was in danger, they were able to avoid crises such as suicide or overdose. Additionally, they were able to avert crises such as a blowup or starting a fight. For example, by assisting students in regulating their emotions, they redirected students to re-engage and calm down rather than start a fight.

WBSWs also **helped resolve issues that happened outside of the building**, with the ability to get everyone involved. Some principals also attributed the reduction of disciplinary actions and the positive direction of behavioral issues to the WBSW.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Impacts from services and supports provided by WBSWs

“ We can’t make the shift in emphasis on mental health and social emotional well-being without positions like the social workers. ”

“ Some students have even come off the outside waiting list after working with the WBSW. There’s been a decrease in crisis referrals, and in the end, its benefitting their well-being. ”

“ The climate is better for the whole building. Students know they are supported. Brings a climate and culture that well-being is important. ”

“ [The WBSW] is a powerful person that has solved challenges of anxiety and attendance like no one else. We have some students who don’t come or can’t make it through the day because of anxiety that [the WBSW] has helped. ”

“ It is hard to quantify the overall impact on attendance, but has impacted those she’s worked with. And now we have more of a why. ”



Findings

Theme 2: Positive impact on school climate and overall well-being, including students with anxiety and attendance issues.

- Principals pointed to the positive impact on students’ overall well-being by providing **more options for mental health and being a trusted adult for students**. One principal noted this is especially true for students who are not seen or heard from as often and another remarked that some students had even come off the wait list for outside mental health services since working with the WBSW. Most principals agreed that the position impacted school climate in a positive way because **students feel supported and we are showing the importance of social-emotional well-being**. One principal, however, voiced that they didn’t think that one person could impact the entire school climate; although, they agreed it is an additional positive resource and probably provided more awareness of mental health concerns.
- Some principals expressed that **although there hasn’t been an overall impact on attendance**, the WBSW made a profound difference among their caseload of students such as those with high-level challenges and those dealing with anxiety. Through the work of the WBSW, staff are also **gaining a better understanding of why some students are not attending school**.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Impacts from services and supports provided by WBSWs

“The WBSW is definitely there to support teachers and staff with significant mental health needs....sometimes the school counselor can not meet the needs of students at the next level.”

“Counselors and administrators are responsible for every single tier of students....WBSWs are a resource that we didn't have before....counselors are so overwhelmed they are no longer able to provide some of the supports that the WBSW has been able to take on.”

“Our WBSW is really good at being there for a family who is homeless and getting them resources to be in a stable living environment again. Things our counselor would not be able to navigate. Same with identifying an early onset mental health illness.”

“It has been educational for our staff. There's been a shift in not just solely focusing on academic success but mental health barriers and the signs to look for.”

“We've had a rise in EML graduation rate, and I think a lot of it is because many of these students were on [the WBSW's] case load and helped to navigate the educational system and the social-emotional learning piece.”



Findings

Theme 3: Provided needed services to support students and relieve counselors.

- As previously mentioned, providing support to students, especially those in need of Tier 3 support, was reported as not only having an impact on students but the counselors and other staff by **providing expertise, outside resource connections, and needed relief to counselors' heavy workloads.**

Other Impact mentions:

- Other school impacts observed by principals included **a shift in staff's understanding of mental health barriers**, the ability to look for signs of need, and serving as another resource when Alternative Placement is recommended for a student. One principal reported an increase in graduation rate among their Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs), many who were on the WBSW's case load.
- Some principals expressed **concern that the WBSW position will be rescinded** because of the difficulty in quantifying the direct impact, or because of someone's negative experience, such as turnover with the WBSW role at their school.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Aspects which are working well about having a school WBSW

“ Is a trusted adult students can go to and confide in, knowing someone is there is a great safety net, bridges gap between home and school, someone outside of admin and counselors that will understand them. There is no stigma among students to see the WBSW. ”

“ Someone beyond the counselors and can help counselors who have been overwhelmed and can't do it all. Makes them more available, supports counselors with resources and suggestions, or fills in the gap where counselors can't provide the needed support. ”

“ Good referral system in place to determine who the WBSW will take and who to refer. There are no barriers such as signatures needed. ”

“ Having an expert on-site is huge! ”

“ Oftentimes, kids will be waiting outside [the WBSW's] office in the lounge. ”

“ Having an onsite expert that can navigate signs of mental health, can navigate situations impacting students and provide therapeutic support and resources. Is consistent in the building, able to triage in real time, can really dive deep into the root of the problem. Brings in an outside lens ”



Findings

The following themes emerged from asking principals what **worked well** about services provided by WBSWs.

Theme 1: Had an expert and trusted adult.

- WBSWs brought a specialized expertise in mental health, capable of **identifying and addressing underlying issues impacting students, providing real-time therapeutic support** that can dive into the root of the problem, and other needed support. WBSWs greatly enhanced the school support system by **collaborating closely with wellness staff** and alleviating counselors, making them more available for other responsibilities. WBSWs were also another trusted adult available for students, bridging the gap between home and school.

Theme 2: The referral system.

- Some pointed to how their referral system worked well and there were **no bureaucratic barriers to deliver support to students**, such as obtaining signatures. Some WBSWs had to learn to refer cases (e.g., to Bridge to Wellness) and not take everything on themselves. It also was a **learning experience for some staff** to use the referral process rather than informally ask the WBSW for student support.

Theme 3: Collaboration and communication.

- Some principals mentioned the WBSW was good at keeping administrators and counselors informed about brewing student situations. One principal had **periodic check-ins** with the WBSW supervisor, which was very helpful in finding ways to best utilize their WBSW.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Challenges encountered with services provided by WBSWs

“ The WBSW takes the Tier 3 students and refers others to Bridge to Wellness or a private service. Right now [the WBSW] can keep up because there is also a therapist in Bridge, and our community is well resourced, but this may not be the same in a different community. ”

“ I would love another WBSW. But I beg, please don't take away the [current] WBSW! We need more of them. We have shown we have a sense of purpose for the position and how to utilize them. Caseloads are going to become overwhelmed. It already feels like we are starting to run out of space and I'm a small school. ”

“ The WBSW having to manage two schools' caseloads is difficult. Having one school would provide more time to meet with students, build connections, and be part of the community. Each school has their own characteristic. ”

“ We definitely need more than one social worker. [The WBSW] caseload is full. We have lots of students in need and new students arriving everyday. ”

“ I have a fear of burnout among WBSWs ”

“ The WBSW does not meet the demand because [she/he] is here only two times a week. Every middle school needs a full time WBSW. They could really make connections. [Currently] they may not be here to talk with a student in [immediate] distress, so are not as effective as could be. ”



Findings

The following themes emerged when principals were asked what **challenges** they encountered.

Theme 1: Not enough scheduled time at school/not enough WBSWs.

- Middle School principals indicated that having a WBSW for only **two days a week is insufficient to meet the high level of need**. More days would enhance consistency, reliability, and the ability to build stronger connections with students and staff. While some principals stated that they will take what they can get and are managing, **others have already requested a full-time WBSW**, noting that increased availability would allow for faster responses and better student support. Some reported that they did not submit a referral to the WBSW because of their limited schedule, particularly when a student needed immediate support.
- At the high school level, the overall sentiment was that **WBSWs were stretched**. They need more than one WBSW, especially in schools with larger enrollment or greater need. One principal requested a WBSW dedicated to the school's EML population due to the influx of new students with trauma. Another said their SWBT constantly discussed how many students to refer because they did not want to overload the WBSW; therefore, they **only referred cases that required more intensive work**. Another explained that in order to keep up with demand, their WBSW only took the students who needed Tier 3 supports and referred the rest to Bridge to Wellness.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Challenges encountered with services provided by WBSWs

“ There are students with LADs and are in general education that need support and don't get either social worker - there is a gap. It is difficult to say to a student [SW name] can't help you. Parents have even come to us requesting and we have to say we can't provide support. ”

“ We have a need for special education students who need support - there is an immediate obstacle, which is huge. There are students with Learning and Academic Disabilities (LAD) that may have a crisis for a period of time and need support. There are students other than Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES), many of which are in general education classes, and there is no one for them. ”

“ Because I don't supervise them, I don't know where they are and so can't count on them. Although they have a schedule, things come up, they take personal days, I'm not sure. ”

“ I think it is good that they are not supervised by me. There needs to be that separation. For example, they can say what administrators or counselors wouldn't say to parents, and can connect with the parent. ”

“ I don't know why WBSWs are not assigned to the school. This would clean up things like who's in charge, who's approving things, and not a double layer of bureaucracy, Navigating leave would be easier. Also, they can be moved to another school because they not part of school staff. ”



Findings

Theme 2: A gap in supports and services for students with IEPs who are also in need of WBSW support.

- Principals expressed concern that the scope of the WBSW supports and services excludes working with students who have IEPs but who also are in need of a WBSW. Consequently, staff also faced the **difficult challenge of explaining to students and parents** why their child could not receive necessary services from the WBSW. Note, this is not referring to students who are part of the Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES) program. These are students in general education classes.

Theme 3: WBSWs are central office staff vs. school staff (a challenge for some).

- Although most principals reported good communication with their WBSW, some principals at both the middle and high school level expressed challenges with the WBSW not being under their direct supervision. This led to a **lack of awareness regarding the WBSW's schedule** (e.g., when on leave, when pulled to another school, etc.) In contrast, other principals noted that they **view the separation positively because it allows the WBSW more flexibility** to support students and connect with parents in a way that school staff cannot, and that not being the supervisor is only a problem if there is an issue.



Results: Small Group Interviews with Principals (N=19)

Suggestions to improve services and supports provided by WBSWs

“ I would advocate an increase in WBSWs to highly impacted schools, regardless of level. ”

“ It would have been helpful to have a training with the supervisor to help us understand what WBSW have capacity to do, suggestions for training...even if it's a presentation at a Principal PLC, such as sharing an exemplar observation and evaluation. ”

“ I wish they wouldn't take WBSWs out of the school one day a week, it's tough. Please reconsider the frequency of their PLC meetings. ”

“ I can't rely on two days of week and there is enough need for five days a week. ”

“ Have a WBSW and High School principal meeting to discuss their work and expectations from them and ours. It would be beneficial for all to be in a room at some point- Like once a year as a reset, as we are planning for year. Discuss how to utilize each other more and level out the various experiences of all the high schools. ”



Findings

Suggestions by secondary principals

- Increase the number of WBSWs
 - Add additional WBSWs to high schools
 - Consider school enrollment size or school needs when allocating WBSWs
 - Allocate more WBSWs to middle schools so that they are assigned full-time to one school
 - Add WBSWs to elementary feeder schools
- Share information with administrators on what services and supports the WBSW can provide.
 - Organize a meeting between all principals and the WBSW office to better understand WBSWs' capacity (e.g., provide a menu of options), share mutual expectations, and discuss best practices for utilizing WBSWs at the school. A recommended opportunity is to hold a meeting during a principal Professional Learning Community (PLC).
- Some principals expressed a need for improved communication between the WBSW and school-building administration regarding potential student situations, as well as the WBSW's schedule and availability. One principal suggested having WBSWs closely connect with an assigned administrator and their "triad," citing Alexandria schools as an example of an effective structure.
- Reconsider the frequency of the WBSW PLCs which takes them out of schools one day each week (e.g., schedule the PLCs every two or more weeks).

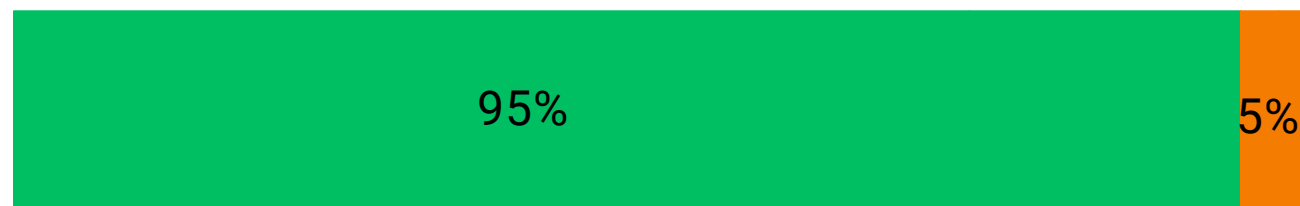


Results: SWBT Survey

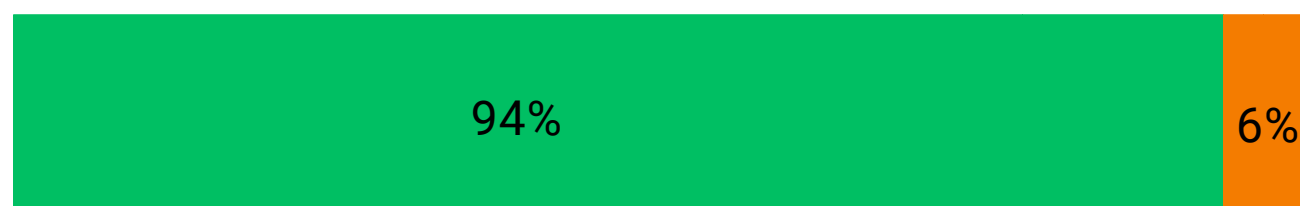
Percentage of agreement with statements about the WBSW role and services

Strongly Agree/Agree **Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

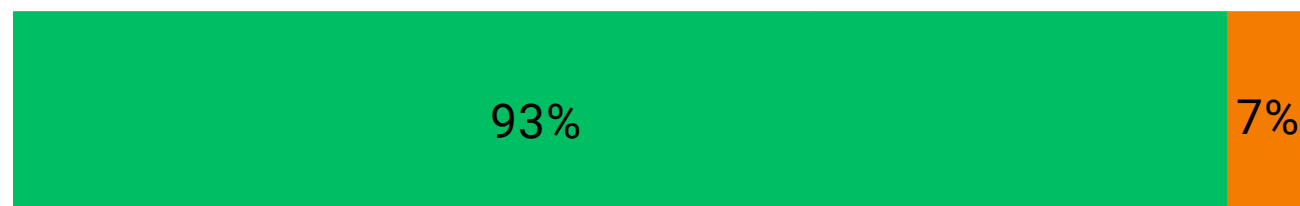
The WBSW is viewed as part of the school community.* (N =61)



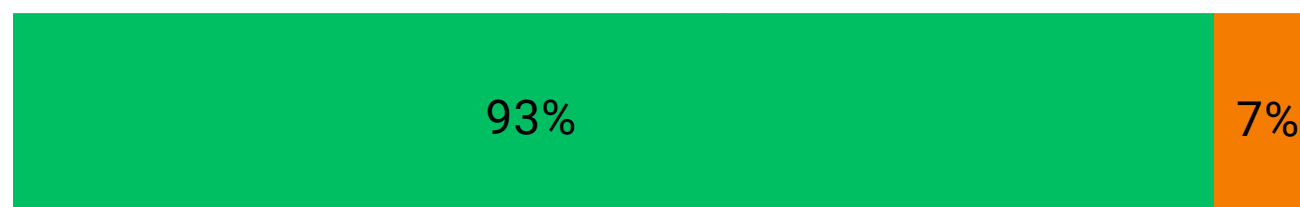
The WBSW provides important services to support our students' well-being. (N=64)



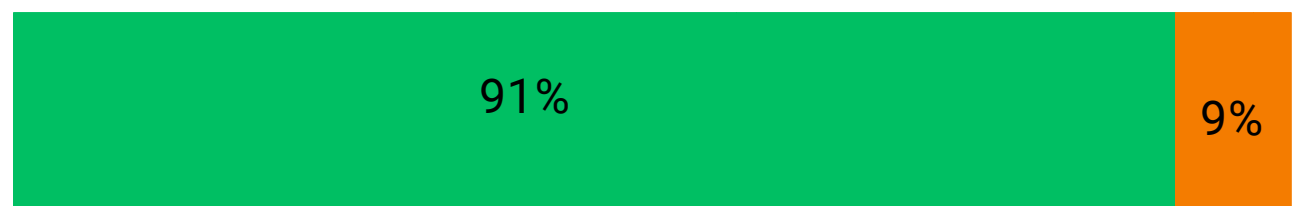
Requests for services provided by the WBSW is being met. (N=60)



I am clear about the differences between the role of the WBSW and the Bridge to Wellness staff. (applicable HS only) (N=40)



I have a clear understanding about the role of the WBSW. (N=64)



Findings

SWBT staff who responded to the survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements regarding the WBSW role and services.

Nearly all SWBT staff agreed that their WBSW was viewed as part of the school community (95%) and provided important services to support their students' well-being (94%).

- Almost three-fourths (74%) strongly agreed that the WBSW was viewed as part of the school community and 78% strongly agreed that the WBSW provided important services to support student well-being.
- Although not shown, a higher proportion of high school staff (100%) agreed their WBSW was viewed as part of the school community compared to middle school staff (84%).

Overall, 93% of SWBT staff agreed that requests for services were being met, 93% understood the difference between the WBSW and Bridge to Wellness, and 91% understood the role of the WBSW. However, it is notable that only about half of the SWBT staff (62%, 55%, and 56% respectively) strongly agreed with these statements.

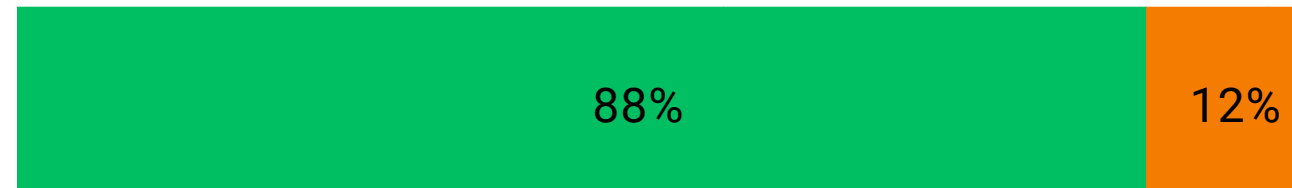


Results: SWBT Survey - Continued

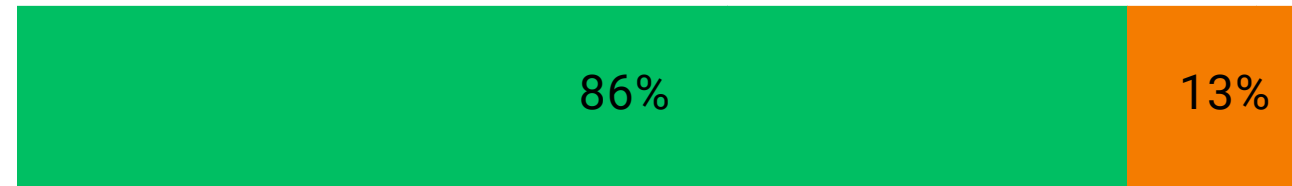
Percentage of agreement with statements about the WBSW role and services

Strongly Agree/Agree **Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

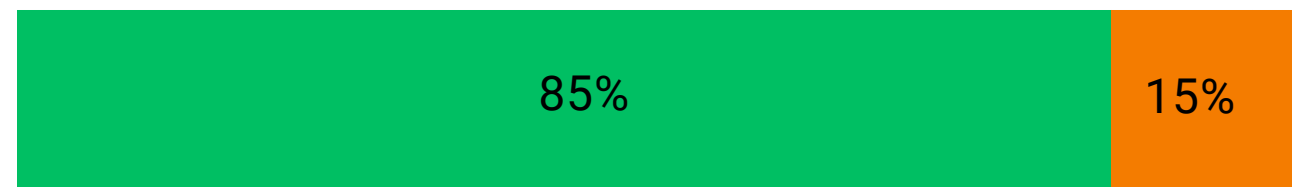
I am clear about the differences between the role of the WBSW and other staff of the SWBT. (N=64)



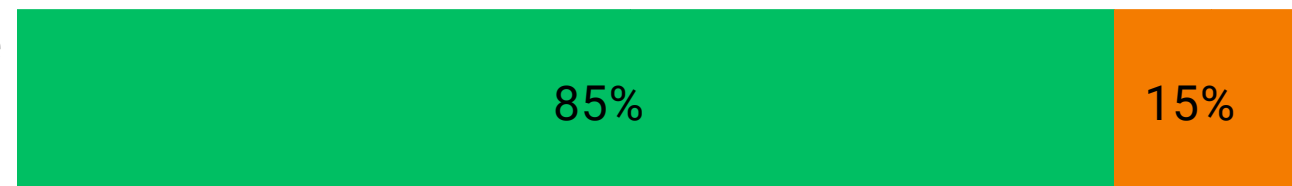
The need for services provided by the WBSW is being met. (N=58)



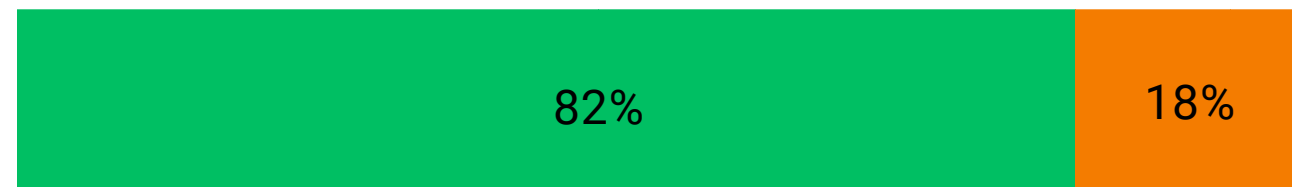
The professional enrichment provided to staff by WBSW was useful. (N=46)



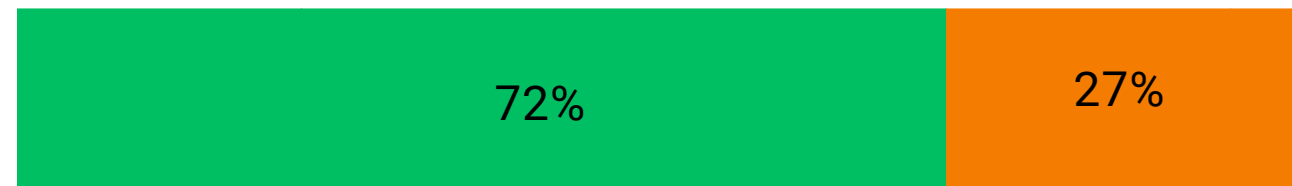
Teachers in our school view the role of the WBSW as supporting their work. (N=40)



The referral process ensures all students have equitable access to services. (N=60)



Most students at my school are aware of the WBSW.* (N=58)



Findings

The majority of SWBT staff who responded to the survey continued to agree with statements regarding services provided by the WBSW.

The lowest proportion of agreement, though still the majority at 72%, was that most students at the school were aware of the WBSW; only 22% strongly agreed with this statement. Notably, a higher proportion of high school staff (83%) agreed with this statement compared to middle school staff (44%).

- Explanations from those who disagreed included the WBSW only handles a small caseload and focuses primarily on top tier referrals and students. Others cited their limited availability at the school.

Those who disagreed that the referral process ensures equitable access pointed to issues with their school's referral system and noted that WBSWs are unable to meet with students with IEPs.

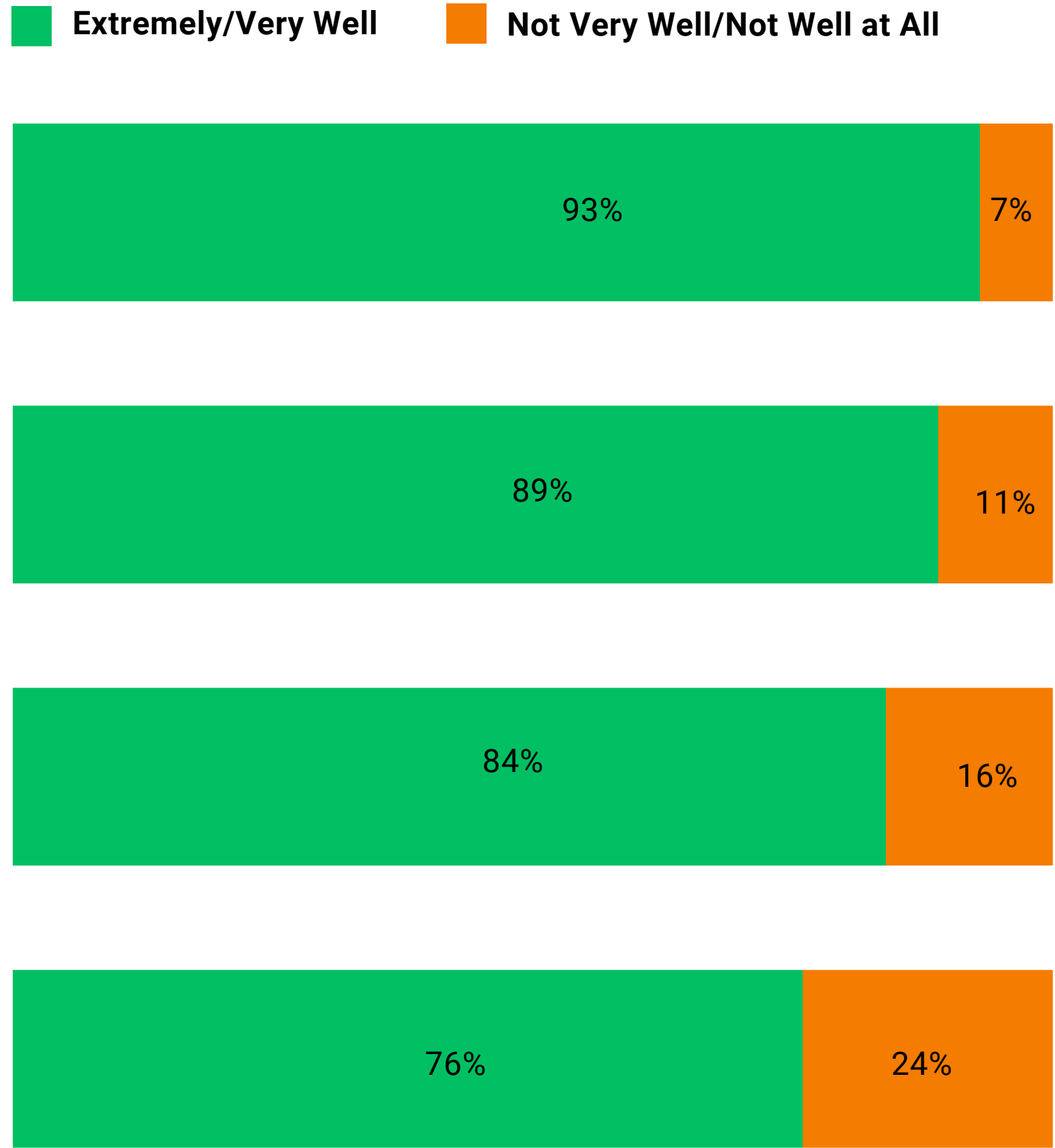
Those who disagreed that professional enrichment was provided to staff explained that the WBSW did not provide professional learning and is seen as an extension of the counseling staff.

Finally, some feedback indicated confusion about the distinct roles between the WBSW, PPW, and PCC, or regarding the students they are to serve.



Results: SWBT Survey

Percentages indicating how well processes and tools worked.



Findings

More than nine of ten SWBT staff (93%) who responded to the survey reported the collaboration between staff and the WBSW worked extremely (54%) or very well (40%).

Nearly nine of ten SWBT staff (89%) reported the referral process for assigning students to the WBSW worked extremely (42%) or very well (47%).

Eighty-four percent of SWBT staff reported the WBSW's availability to provide needed services to students worked extremely (52%) or very well (32%).

- A greater proportion of high school (93%) than middle school staff (63%) reported the WBSW's availability to provide services worked well.
- Explanations for why this did not work well were that WBSWs have limited time at the school or the demand was greater than their capacity.

Just over three-fourths (76%) reported that the professional enrichment provided by the WBSW worked extremely (33%) or very well (43%).

- Explanations for why this did not work well included that there was no professional enrichment provided or they were not aware of it.

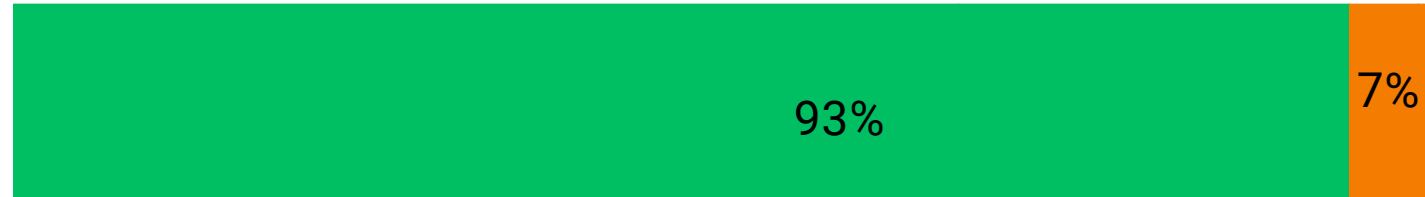


Results: SWBT Survey

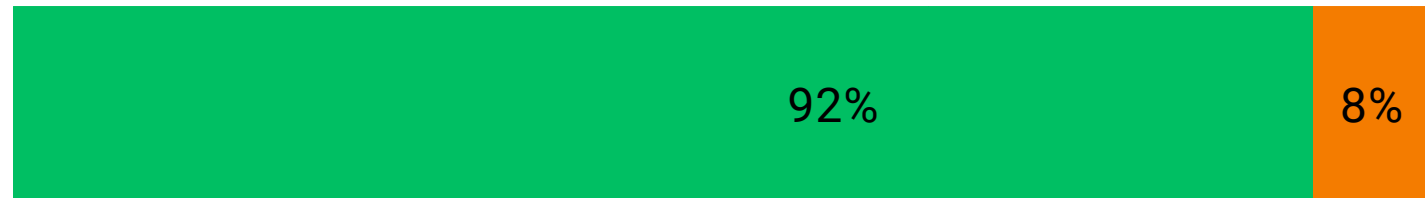
Percentages of agreement with statements about impact of WBSW services.

Strongly Agree/Agree **Strongly Disagree/Disagree**

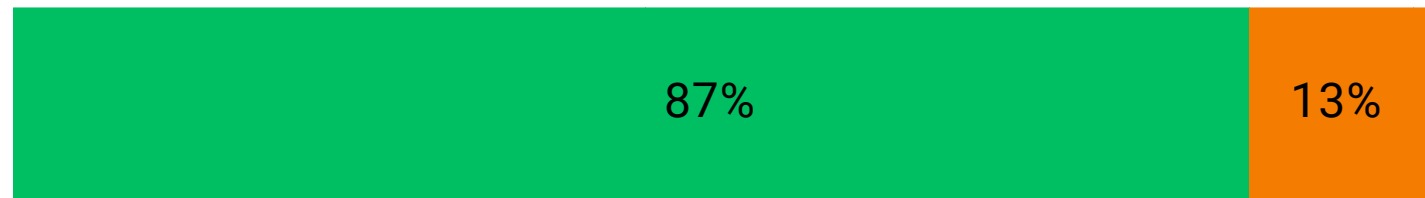
Overall the WBSW services is having a positive impact on student well-being at my school. (N=62)



The WBSW services have positively impacted our school climate. (N=59)



The WBSW services have positively impacted student behavior. (N=52)



The WBSW services have positively impacted bullying and harassment. (N=41)



The WBSW services have positively impacted student attendance. (N=41)



Findings

Nearly nine out of ten SWBT staff who responded to the survey agreed that services provided by WBSWs had a positive impact on student well-being (93%), school climate (92%), and student behavior (87%).

About four-fifths (81%) agreed that services provided by WBSWs positively impacted bullying and harassment, and 73% agreed with the positive impact on student attendance.

- Although “don’t know” responses were not included in the percentage calculations shown, it is notable that more than one-third of SWBT staff indicated uncertainty (i.e., don’t know response) regarding whether services provided by WBSWs positively impacted bullying and harassment (34%), or student attendance (36%).



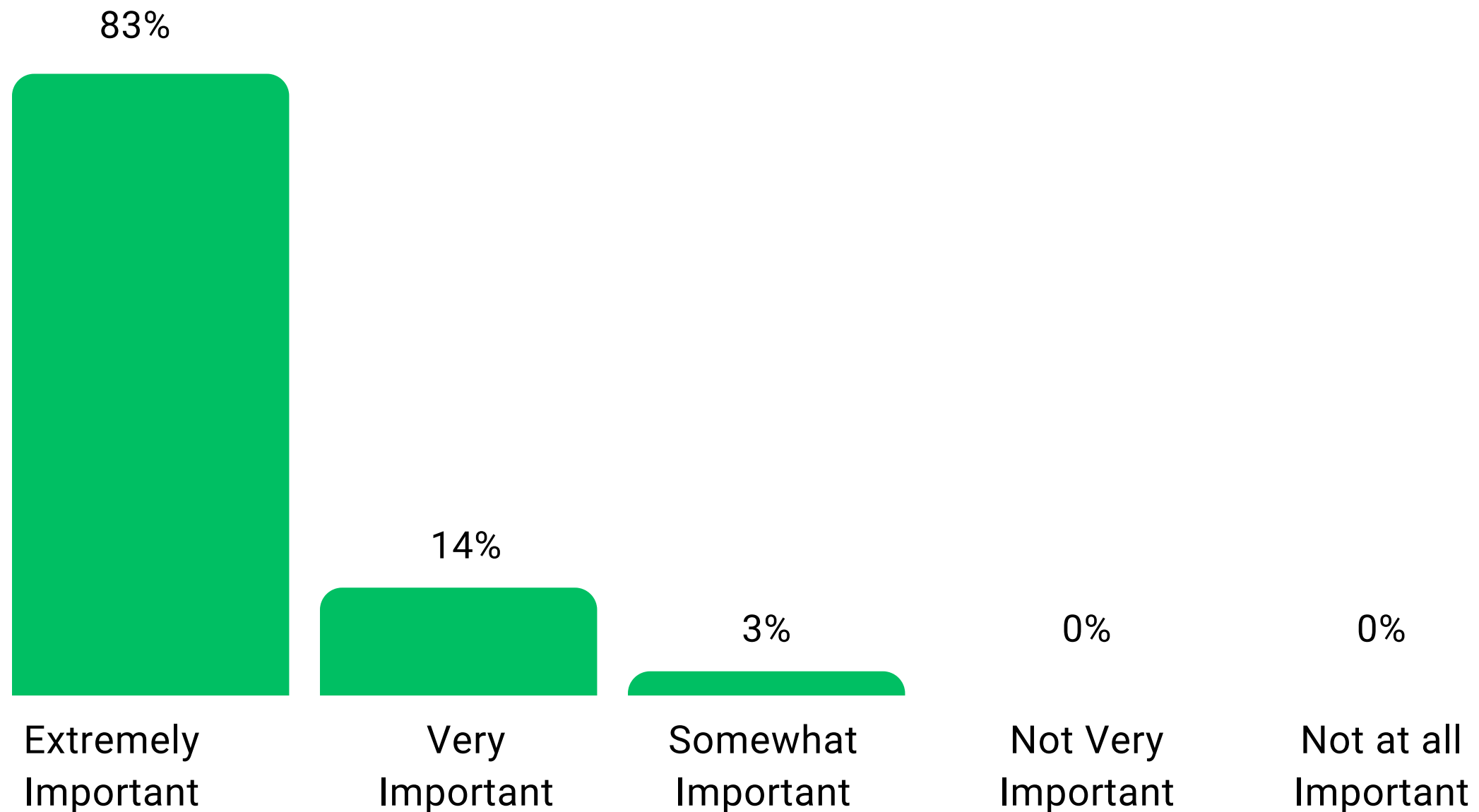
Results: SWBT Survey (N=64)

Percentages indicating the importance of services provided by WBSWs



Findings

How important is it that your school retain a school Well-Being Social Worker?



SWBT staff were asked to rate the importance of retaining a WBSW in their school.

Nearly all (97%) reported that it was extremely important (83%) or very important (14%) to retain a dedicated WBSW in their school.

SWBT Feedback: Successes (N=54)

Verbatim responses on the successes of having a school WBSW

In an open-ended survey question, SWBT staff described the successful aspects of having a WBSW at their school. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Collaborates with SWBT and counselors, is part of the staff (n=20)

- Works as a liaison between the SWBT and Bridge to Wellness (BTW).
- Collaboration with the SWBT is excellent. Collaboration also happens beyond meetings.
- Collaboration with the BTW staff and our SWBT has been extremely successful and impactful.
- It has been an excellent addition and support to the counseling department.
- Because of the WBSW, the BTW staff have been able to collaborate with the school staff effectively to provide support to students and their families.
- WBSW is willing to chip in when necessary, attending Back-to-School-Night, an evening event for Latino Mental Health, and PTSA events.

Qualifications and expertise (n=12)

- They are able to coordinate with mental health agencies and provide referrals to parents...the PPW can also do this, but with five schools, it is amazing to have a trained social worker who can do this.
- The level of support that this social worker can provide to our students, mostly those who cannot access other supports outside of school, is enormously helpful! It is beyond the scope of school counselors.
- Having a specifically trained social worker/mental health provider to identify next steps and interventions for students; to individually support students who may not be able to get therapy services outside of school; and having access to their knowledge and experience when problem-solving for student supports.
- The consultation with a highly trained and knowledgeable professional is extremely valuable to the school team.

Invaluable and essential part of our staff (n=11)

- Our school social worker is an essential staff member. Because of [name], the SWBT have been able to collaborate with the school effectively to provide support to students and their families.
- The support of our WBSW is critical and an indispensable part of our team.
- Our school social worker is INTEGRAL to our school and student success. We can't do this without her.
- Invaluable as a resource and a support to us all.

Sees more difficult cases and students in crisis (n=9)

- Adds a unique perspective to our problem solving for students and families; especially for those who have experienced barriers to accessing services.
- Our WBSW is a go-to person when we have a student in crisis .
- They are able to support administration in working with challenging students.
- [Our WBSW] has built strong relationships with our students..
- The fact that students just walk into the WBSW's office for a safe space to chat during lunch.....that's huge.
- Excellent with our kids. Goes into Connection and Alt classes to work with them.

Great connection with students (n=8)

More students needs are addressed with the addition of a WBSW (n=7)

- Extra support for students; With limited counselors, nice to have additional support

Provides one-on-one support (n=6)

- Direct and immediate crisis support; Individually supports students who may not be able to get

Ability to follow-up with families (n=5)

- Able to follow up with families much more than we can; Invaluable to speak with families

Meets with groups of students (n=5)

- Small groups of students have benefitted a wide range of students; Running groups

SWBT Feedback: Challenges (N=39)

Verbatim responses on the challenges of implementing services provided by a school WBSW and suggestions

In an open-ended survey question, SWBT staff described challenges with the implementation of services provided by the WBSW. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Limited availability: two days a week at school (MS comments), one day a week at PLC (HS comments) (n=13)

- *Our only challenge has been the limited time she is with our school. Two days a week is just not enough for a large comprehensive middle school.*
- *Limited time and inconsistent schedule, assigned to us for two days a week. Doesn't work school hours, works central office hours.*
- *Wish we had [WBSW] full-time.*

- *It would be helpful if social workers weren't out of the building on a weekly basis (every Tuesday). Maybe offer half day trainings or alternate days.*
- *Having a professional day EVERY WEEK where the social worker is out of the building is excessive. The current social workers that are assigned to special programs do not have WEEKLY PD and meetings that require them to miss an entire day.*

Demand is high (all HS comments) (n=7)

- *Our WBSW is fantastic and is doing all she can, and often goes above and beyond for students, but it is difficult for her to keep up with the demands of students' needs. She is only one person!*
- *The needs of the school are greater than the capacity of our WBSW. She does a fantastic job, we just have too many students who need intensive support.*

- *Oftentimes there are more students that need support than slots available to provide the support. In other words, there can be a waiting list.*
- *The need for services outweighs her capacity. We could probably have five WBSWs.*
- *The needs of the school are greater than the capacity of our WBSW. She does a fantastic job, we just have too many students who need intensive support.*

Defining and communicating role (n=5)

- *We didn't have ample time to really plan prior to the school year. We've been defining the role as we go.*
- *I don't feel that the whole school community (mostly students) are aware of services.*

- *We don't have a clear understanding of the WBSW's duty/role. [The WBSW] has own documentation system/protocol which can make it challenging for follow through and collaboration.*

Restrictions with type of students or number of students (n=5)

- *The restriction of not receiving referrals/providing individual counseling for students with an IEP is having a significant impact. With the state of our IEP services post-Covid, this student group needs more social-emotional support in school.*
- *[WBSWs] are basically 'protected' from having to work as the other professional, state-certified SWBT staff have to work, which is with no limits.*

- *Should be able to assist in more ways. It seems as if they are limited in their role and are only able to assist a specific small group of students.*
- *Not being able to work with students with IEPs.*

Other (n=8)

- *Finding a physical space for the [WBSW] to work.*
- *Lack of communication on caseloads and student updates.*
- *Growing pains to work in tandem with other resources in the building.*

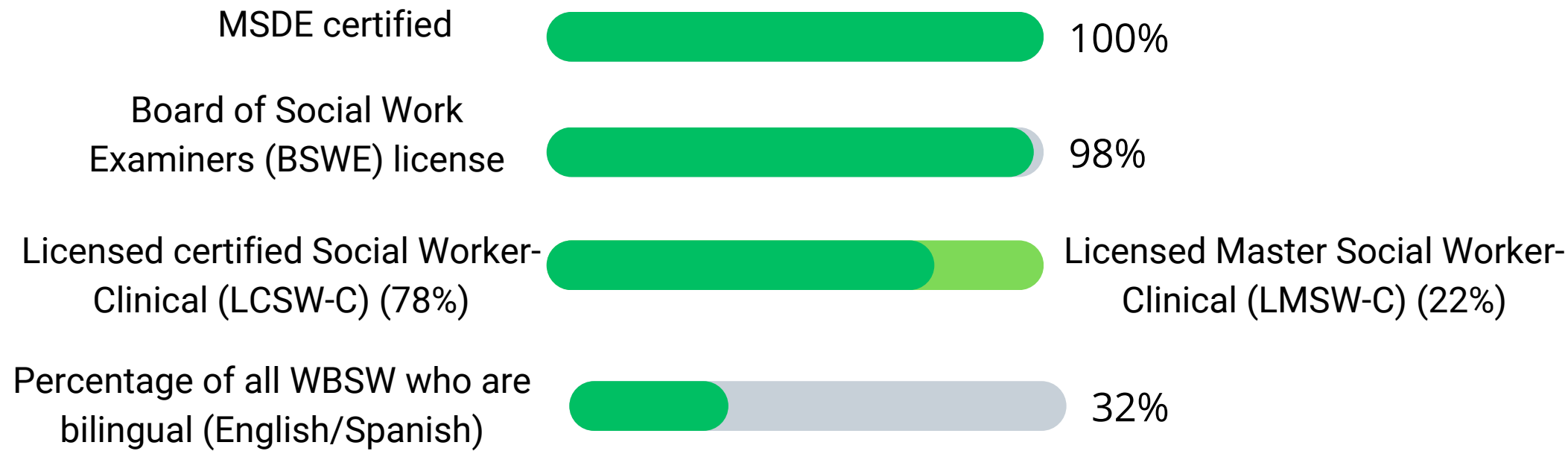
Suggestions (N=33)

- *Make them more available (e.g., more days a week) (n=10)*
- *More clarity on role and services available (e.g., professional learning) (n=5)*
- *Other: add more WBSWs, add them to elementary schools, allow WBSW to work with any student, assure a good fit such as bilingual and expertise, provide more parent education and outreach, assign WBSWs to one school (n=20)*

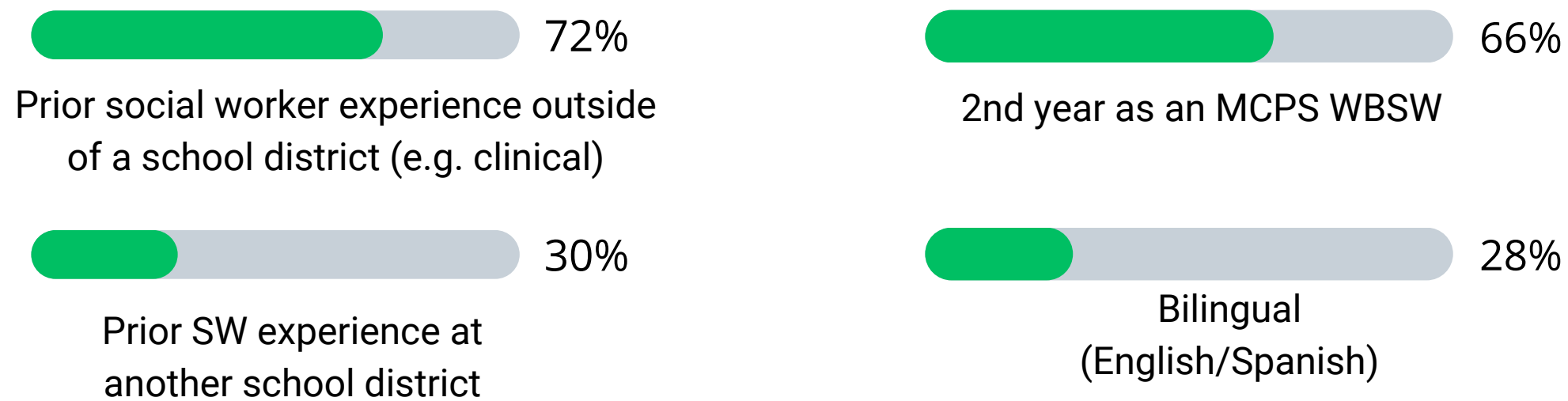
Results: Background of WBSWs

Credentials of all WBSWs and experience of WBSW survey respondents

Credentials of all WBSWs (N=41)



WBSW Respondent Background (N=29)



Findings

From information obtained by the WBSW unit, just about a one-third (32%) of all WBSWs (not just survey participants) are bilingual in English and Spanish and 100% are MSDE certified. Almost all (98%) have a license from the Board of Social Worker Examiners with 78% being Licensed Certified Social Workers-Clinical (LCSW-C) and 22% being Licensed Master Social Workers-Clinical (LMSW-C).

The majority (72%) of the WBSWs who responded to the survey had prior experience outside of a school district and almost a third (30%) had prior experience with another school district.

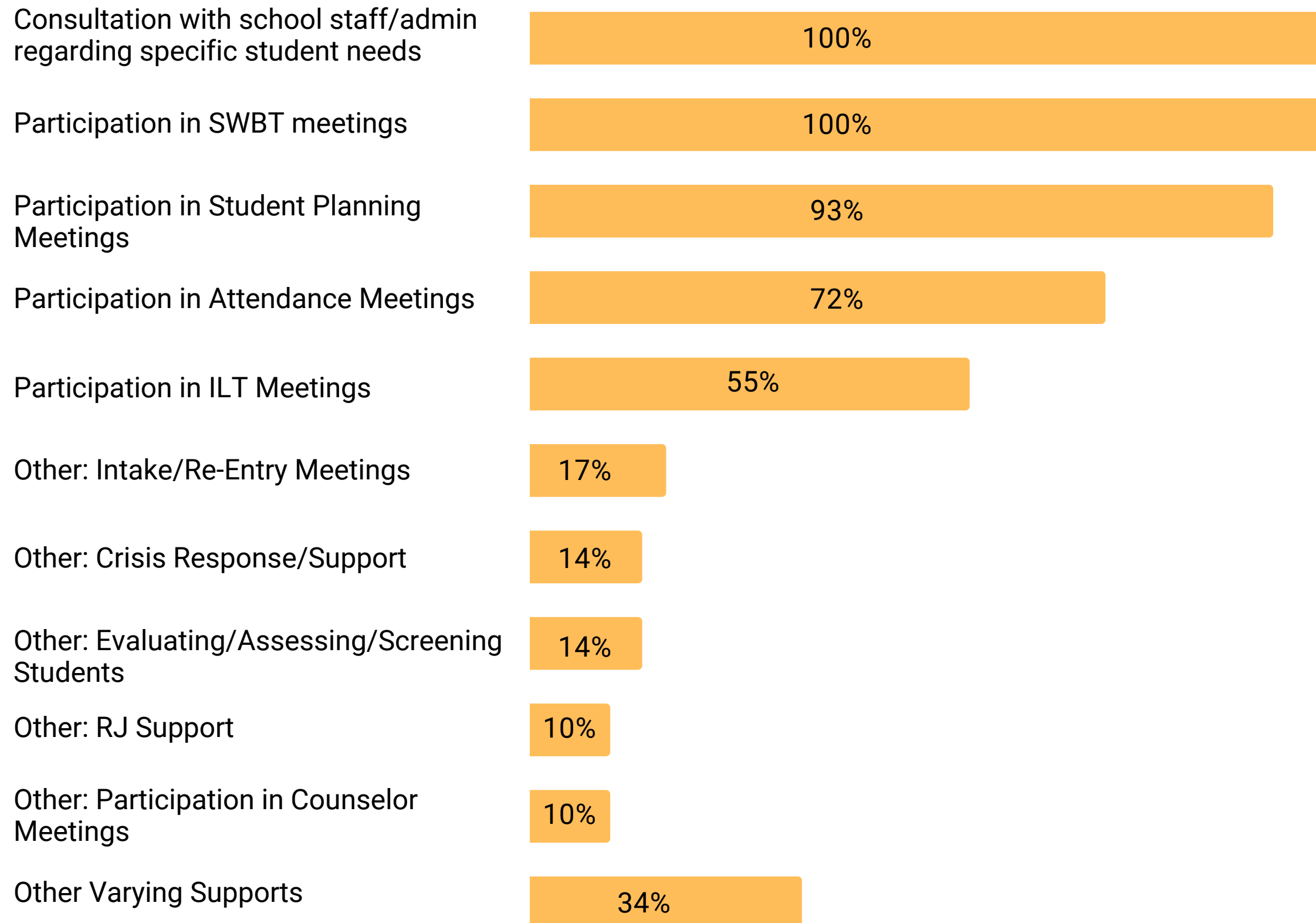
Two-thirds (66%) of the WBSWs were in their second year as a WBSW at MCPS and 28% were bilingual in English and Spanish.



Results: WBSW Survey N=29

Percentages of reported supports provided to school staff this year

Percentages of Reported Supports Provided



Findings

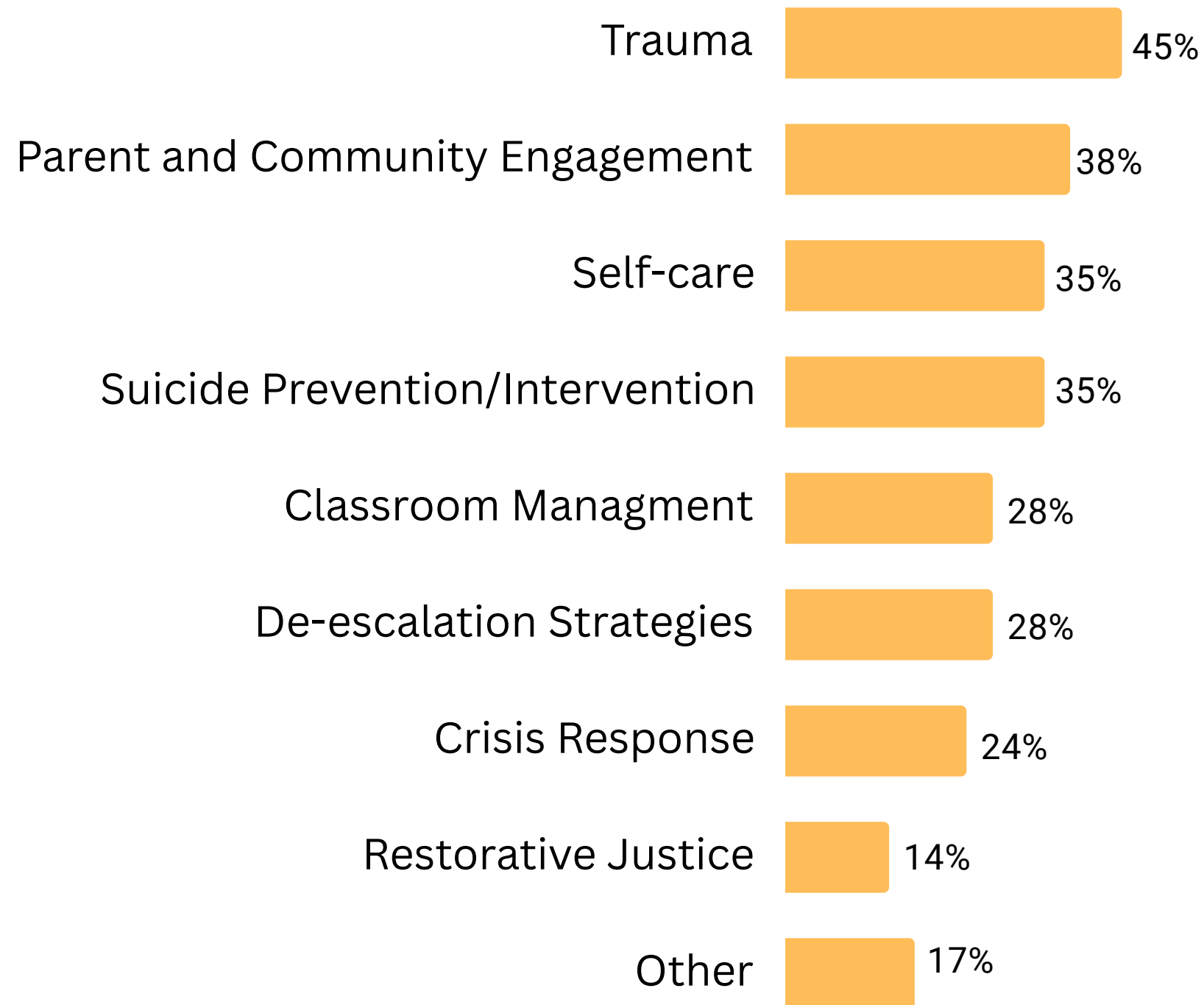
All (100%) of the WBSWs reported providing consultation to the school administrators and staff regarding specific student needs and participation in SWBT meetings, and nearly all (93%) participated in student planning meetings. Almost three-fourths (72%) reported participating in school attendance meetings and about one-half (55%) participated in Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meetings.



Results: WBSW Survey N=29

Percentages of reported professional learning topics delivered to school staff individually or collaboratively

Percentages of Professional Learning Topics Provided



Findings

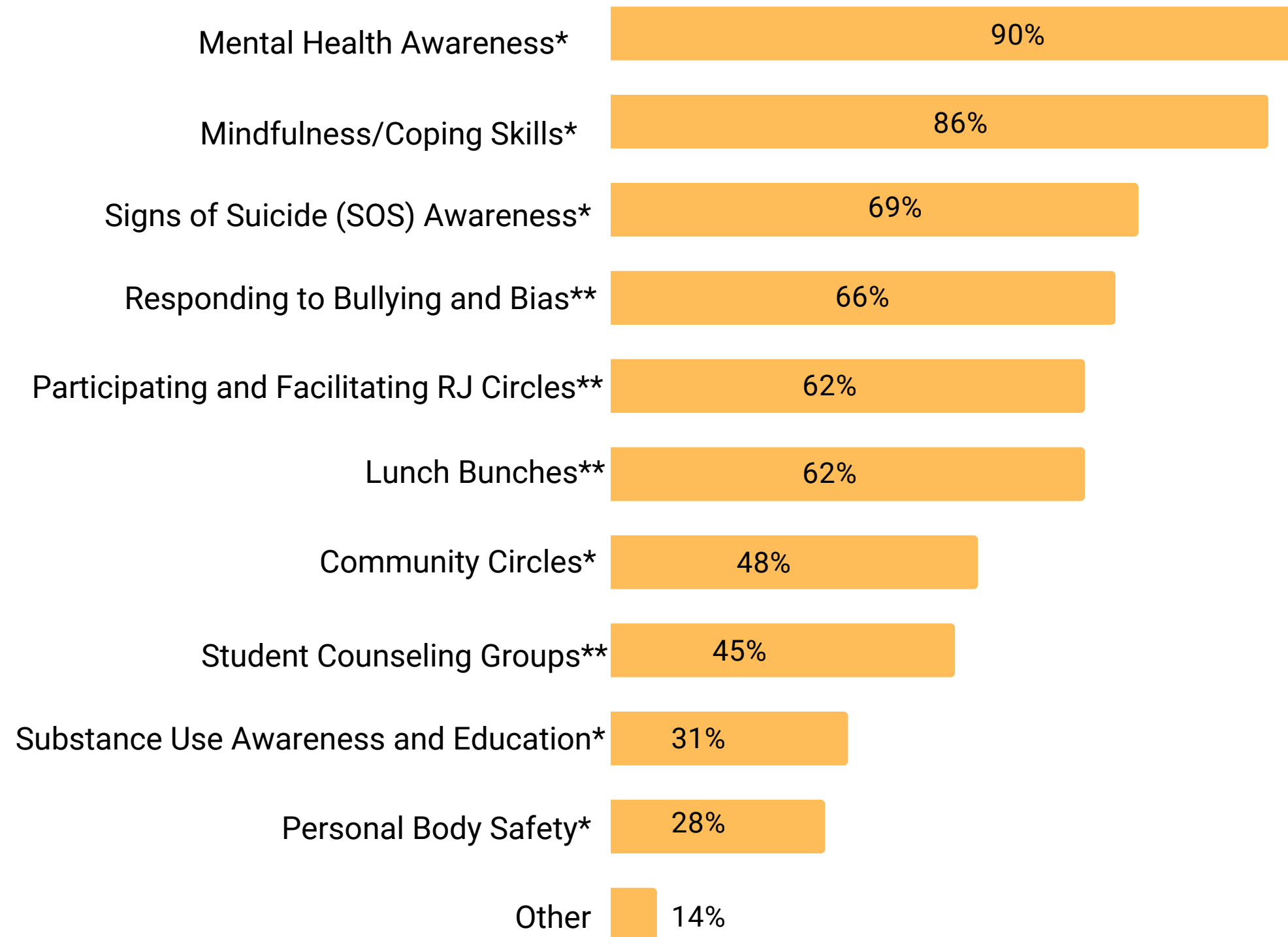
The most frequently reported professional learning topic delivered by WBSWs was trauma related (45%), such as trauma informed practices and trauma on the brain. This was followed by parent and community engagement (38%), self-care (35%), and suicide-prevention (35%). About a quarter of the WBSW respondents covered classroom management (28%), de-escalation strategies (28%), and crisis response (25%). Fewer than one-fifth reported delivered topics related to RJ (14%) and other miscellaneous topics (17%).



Results: WBSW Survey N=29

Percentages of reported Tier 1 and 2 topics and services delivered to students individually or collaboratively

Percentages of Tier 1 and 2 Topics and Services Provided



* Tier 1, ** Tier 2

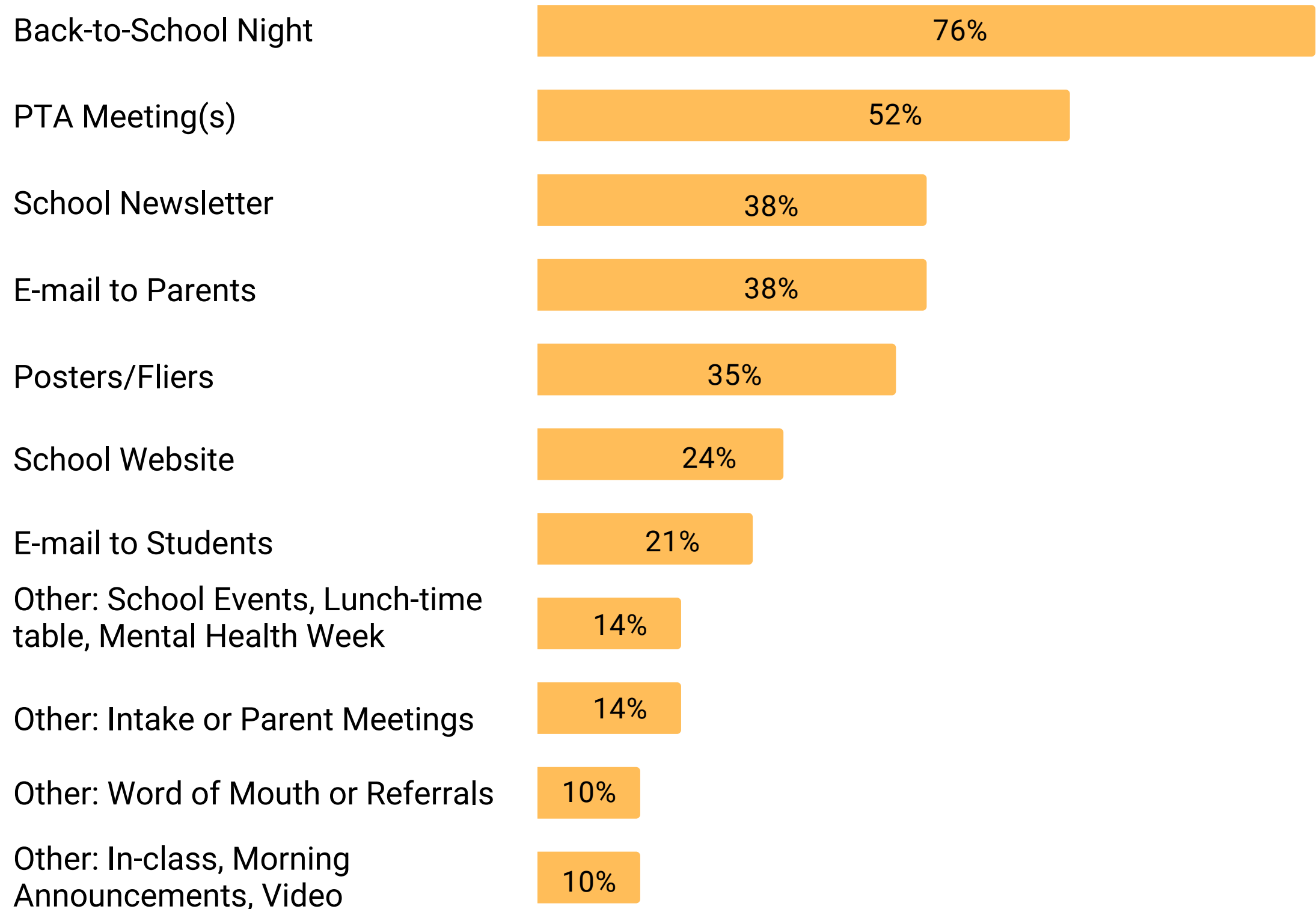


Findings

In addition to providing services to students with Tier 3 needs, WBSWs also provided Tier 1 and 2 services. Almost all WBSWs reported providing mental health awareness (90%) and mindfulness and coping skills (86%) to students, either individually or collaboratively with other well-being staff.

Two-thirds or more reported providing student sessions on Signs of Suicide Awareness (SOS) (69%) and responding to bullying and bias incidents (66%). Additionally, over half (62%) participated in facilitating RJ circles and lunch bunches. Fewer than one-half participated in community circles (48%), and student counseling groups (45%). Fewer than one-third reported providing substance abuse awareness (31%) and personal body safety lessons (28%).

Percentages of Reported Outreach Methods Used



WBSWs were asked in what ways they or staff made students and families aware of their availability and services provided., Over three-fourths (76%) reported outreach at Back-to-School night, and about one-half (52%) shared information at a PTA meeting.

More than one-third shared information about their availability and services with families through the school newsletter (38%), an e-mail to parents (38%), and posters or fliers (35%).



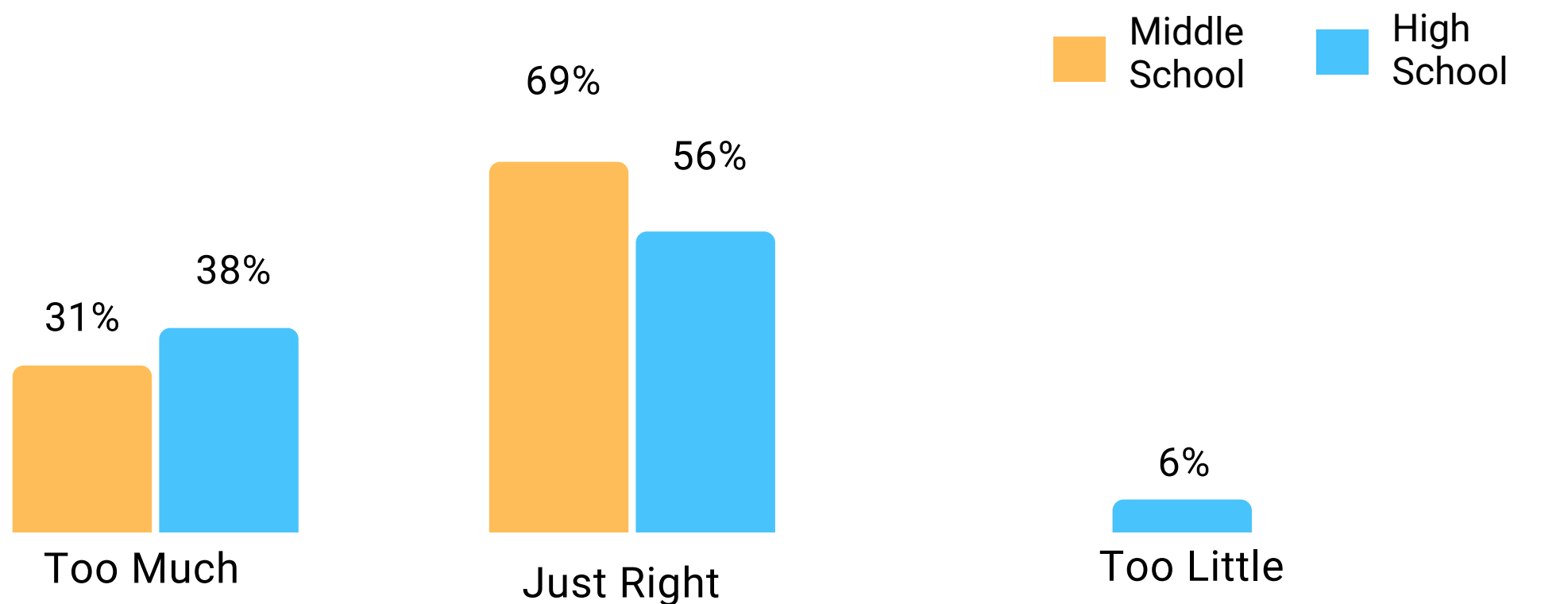
Results: WBSW Survey N=29

Reported student caseloads managed by WBSWs

Average Caseload

Caseload	Average	Median	Largest
Middle School	10	10	20
High School	20	19	49

Perception of Caseload



Findings

WBSWs with focus schools were asked to report their average and largest student caseload that they individually managed at anyone time. Cases can include on-going individual counseling, group counseling, or informal check-in/office hours with referred students. Student support may go beyond assigned caseload. Middle School WBSWs reported an average of 10 cases per school and high school WBSWs reported an average of 20.

More than two-thirds (69%) of middle school WBSWs and 56% of high school WBSWs, reported their case load was just right while, just under one-third (31%) of middle school WBSWs and 38% of high school, reported it was too much to manage.

WBSW Feedback: Caseload

Summary of verbatims explaining reasons caseload too much

WBSWs who reported their caseloads were too much to manage, explained their reasons. A summary of responses are below.

Too much to manage explanations: (n=11)

Several of the WBSWs who reported their caseloads were too much to manage explained it was difficult to manage their caseloads due to time and other responsibilities. They reported struggling to support all referred students while balancing meetings and other duties, such as being an active member of the SWBT, handling crisis situations, consultations, and conducting mental health awareness and engagement activities. Additionally, regular student check-ins, triage, and walk-in students add to their management challenges. One WBSW explained, “a caseload would ideally ensure students receive consistent, individualized counseling, which is not always the case.” The high demand for mental health support often leads to waitlisting students, emphasizing the need for more mental health professionals in schools.

Additionally, some WBSWs expressed that their caseloads were overwhelming when having to split their time between two schools. This division of time limits their ability to meet with students and address student needs immediately, in addition to conducting student group sessions and staff development. Furthermore, the dual-school assignment is compounded by reduced opportunities to make up missed sessions due to student absences, unexpected schedule changes, and school closures. This makes it difficult to handle more than just meeting with students.

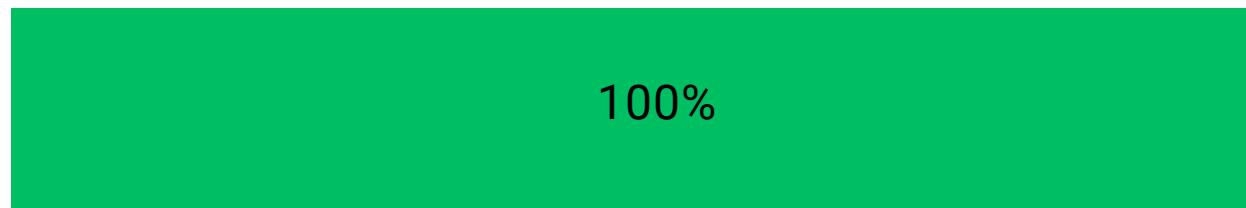


Results: WBSW Survey

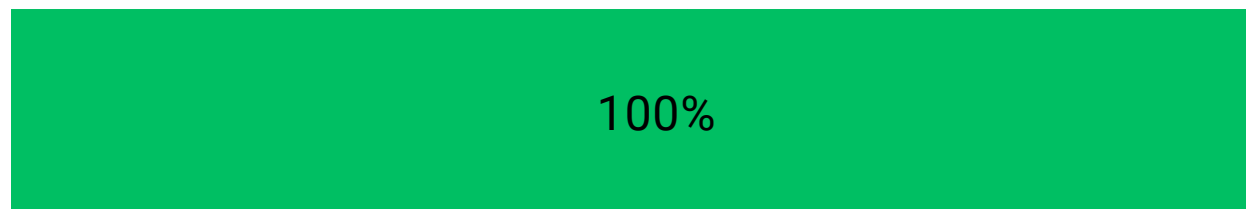
Percentages of agreement with statements about the WBSW role and process

Strongly Agree/Agree **Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

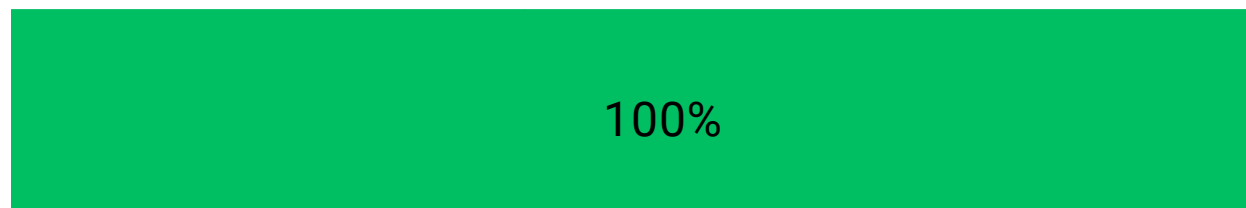
I am clear about the differences between my role as a WBSW and the Bridge to Wellness Staff. - HS Only (N=11)



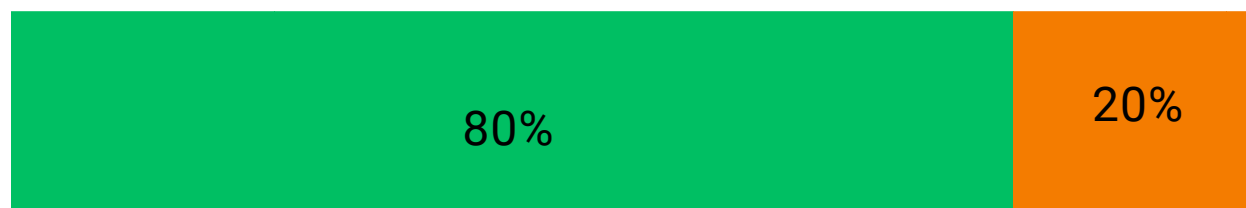
I am clear about the differences between my role as WBSW and other members of SWBT. (N=28)



I have a clear understanding of my role as an MCPS WBSW. (N=29)



The referral process ensures that all students have equitable access to services. (N=29)



Findings

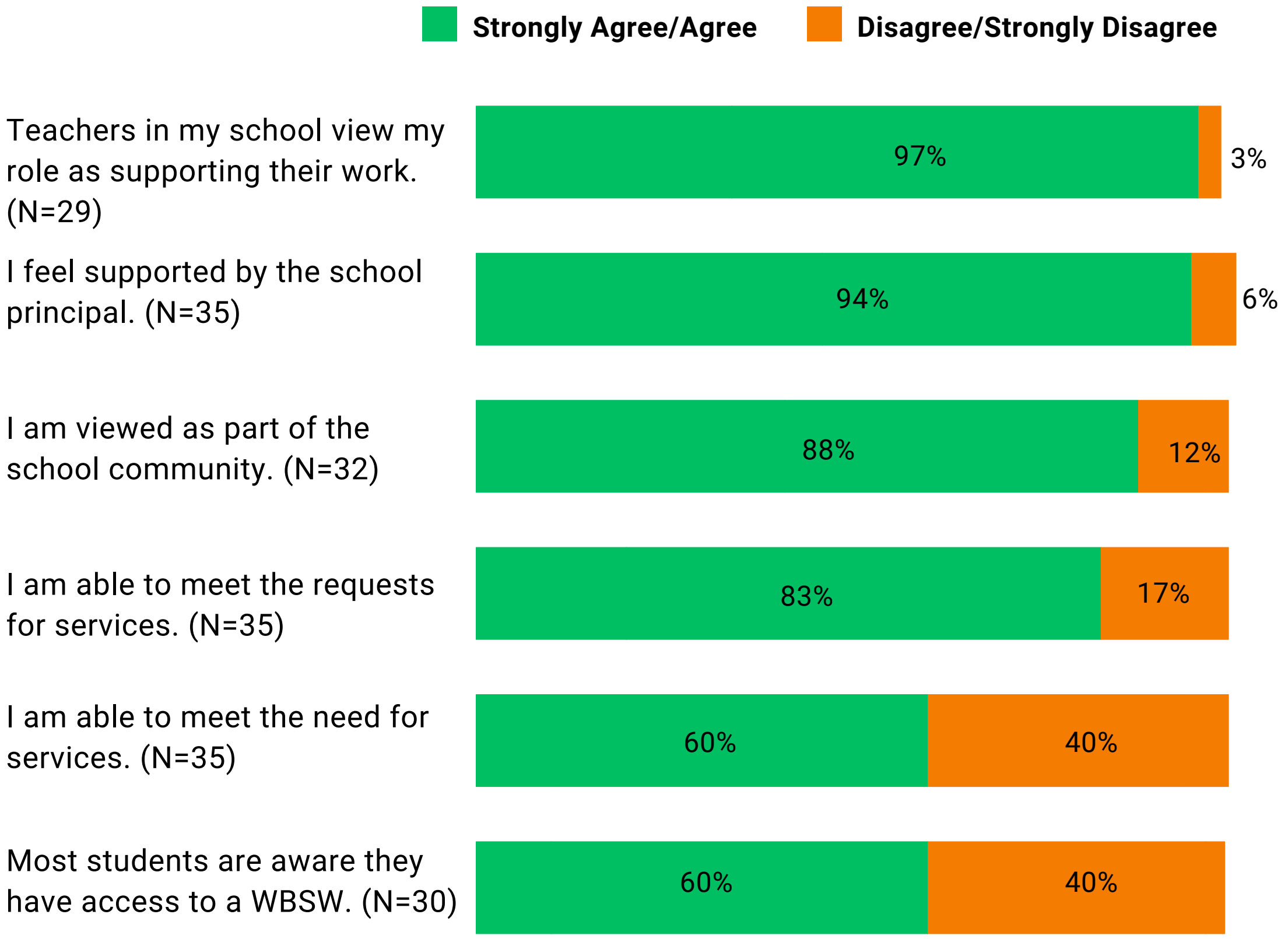
All (100%) of the WBSWs agreed that they were clear about the differences between their role and the role of the Bridge to Wellness staff and SWBT staff.

Although all respondents agreed they understood their role, less than half (41%) strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of their role.

Although 80% of respondents agreed that the referral process ensures equitable access, only 21% strongly agreed with this statement, and 20% disagreed.

Results: WBSW Survey

Percentages of agreement with statements about the WBSW role and services



Note: Percentages were calculated from all ratings submitted. WBSWs were asked to give a rating for each school they support; six WBSWs responded for a second school

Findings

A large majority of the WBSWs agreed that teachers in their school viewed the WBSW role as supporting their work (97%), they felt supported by their principal (94%), they were viewed as part of the community (88%), and they were able to meet requests (83%).

Six out of ten (60%) agreed they were able to meet the need for services or that most students were aware they had access to services; 40% disagreed with these statements.

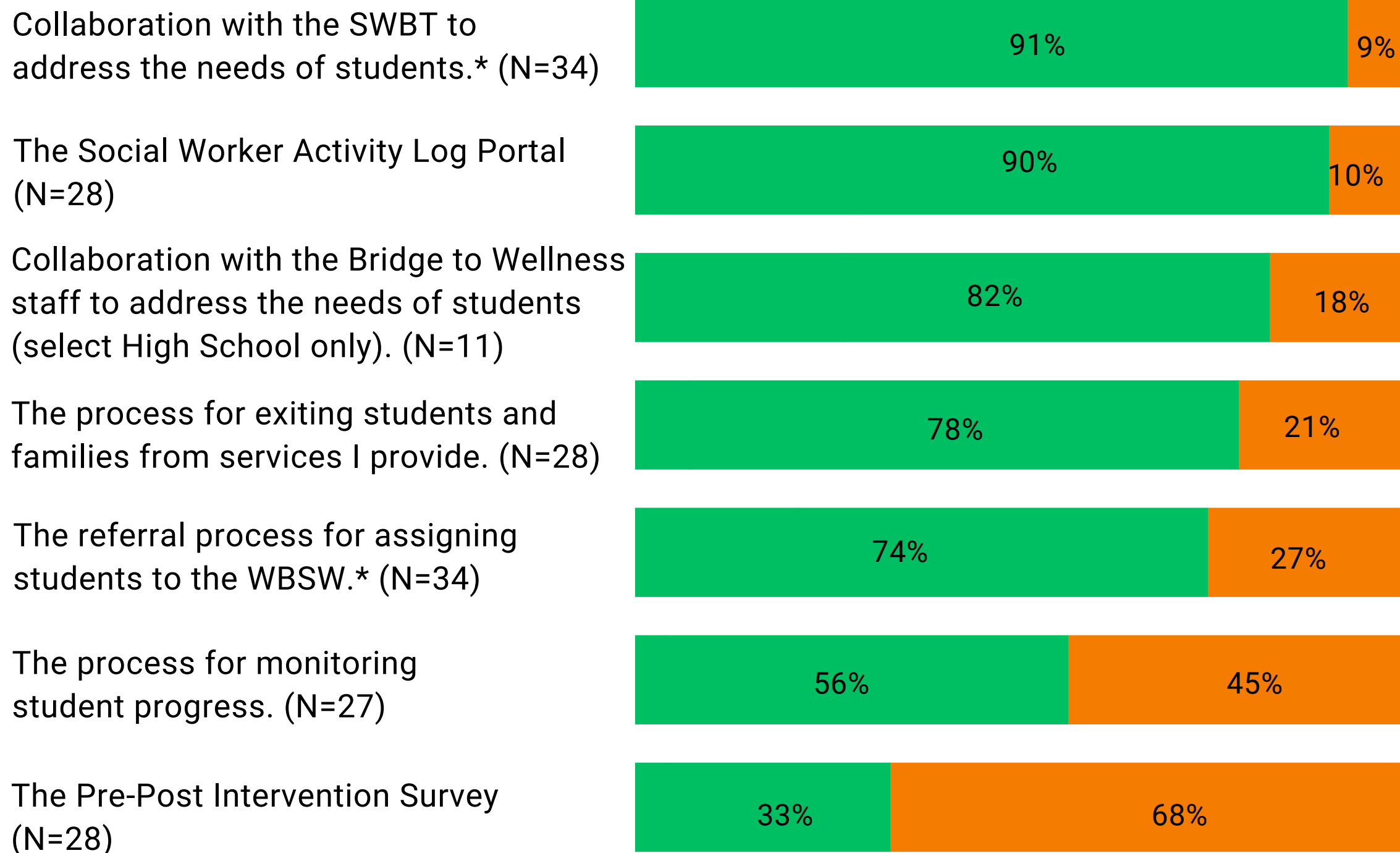
- Through open-ended responses, some of the WBSWs explained that they disagreed they were able to meet the need for services because the demand was just too high to meet the needs of everyone who needed it. One WBSW wrote “In fact, the most stressful part of my job is not being able to meet regularly with each student that needs my services.” Additionally, some explained that they disagreed that most students were aware they have access to them because they were only at the school a limited time and/or the position was new to the school.



Results: WBSW Survey

Percentages indicating how well processes and tools worked.

Extremely//Very Well **Not Very Well/Not Well at All**



*Note. For this item, percentages were calculated from all ratings submitted. WBSWs were asked to give a rating for each school they support; six WBSWs responded for a second school.



Findings

Nearly all (91%) WBSWs reported that collaboration with their school's SWBT and use of the Social Worker Activity Log Portal (SWALP) worked well (21% and 29% respectively, gave a rating of extremely well).

A large majority also reported collaboration with the Bridge to Wellness staff (82%), the process for exiting students (78%), and the referral process (74%) worked well. However, a much lower proportion reported these worked extremely well.

Only 56% reported the process for monitoring student progress worked well, and 33% reported the pre-post student intervention tool worked well; 45% and 68% respectively reported these processes did not work very well.

- Some WBSWs cited issues with the pre-post student tool ability to clearly and accurately capture progress based on individual student needs and that the survey was not often used. Others mentioned that their school either does not use a clear referral process or that it was still in development.

WBSW Feedback: Successes (N=23)

Verbatim responses on the successes of providing supports to schools

In an open-ended survey question, WBSWs described the most successful aspects of providing supports to their focus schools. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Collaboration and understanding among staff (n=10)

- *Having a principal and counseling team that understands our role, the boundaries of our role, and sees the value of a social worker.*
- *The school psychologist and I collaborate very well around students and support each other to resolve barriers. I also have a very good relationship with the counselors and PPW.*

- *I am now in my second year at the school and feel much more connected with administration.*
- *The collaboration with the resource counselor, counselors, and SWBT has been successful in planning and implementing supports for students.*
- *Engaging and flexible teachers when it comes to meeting with students.*

Establishing relationships and connections with students (n=9)

- *Making the connections with students and families.*
- *Being in my second year at my school, I have been able to build better relationships and create community. This has allowed me to reach more students and engage with students and staff in a deeper way.*

- *I have been able to make strong connections with the students I work with and this is helpful for the therapeutic process.*
- *The students on my caseload seem to feel supported by me. Many have brought their friends to meet with me if the friend needs help.*

Providing individual counseling and support to students (n=8)

- *Students who need counseling services that would not otherwise receive it.*
- *The most successful aspects with providing supports is that we use an individualized approach.*

- *Meeting consistently with my individual caseload.*
- *Being able to work with undocumented students and giving them support they otherwise would not have access to.*

Seeing an impact or affect on students (n=6)

- *The children meeting their individual goals and improving their grades and behavior.*
- *I am seeing the fruits of the work started with students the previous year. I have been privileged to see students I have been supporting, grow, mature, and heal.*

- *Impacting their lives by providing mental health support and advocating for them to the teachers.*
- *Increased school engagement.*

Being a resource to staff (n=5)

- *I've been able to be a resource for staff who frequently come to me for advice and consultation about students in their classrooms. The school as a whole is more aware of my presence this year and accessing services regularly.*

- *Having a social worker perspective during discussions about students, provides a shift in thinking about supports for our students.*
- *Consulting directly with staff teams and teachers.*

WBSW Feedback: Challenges (N=22) and Suggestions (N=18)

Verbatim responses on the challenges of providing supports and suggestions

In an open-ended survey question, WBSWs described challenges of providing supports to their focus schools, followed by suggestions. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Availability and limited time to keep up with the need (n=10)

- *The need is higher than what I can meet and many of the students I am referred would benefit from ongoing therapy.*
- *The amount of days at my school prevent me from being more integrated into my school.*
- *The need for services exceeds my capacity to provide them.*

- *There is always so much going on and so many students in need of varying levels of support. I strongly believe having more social workers in the schools would allow for more students to be reached.*
- *Less clusters would be more feasible to provide interventions that required more than a one time consult with recommendations the school would carry out.*

Referral system, role clarity (n=6)

- *Administrative teams often do not understand our role and the limitations of what we are able to provide. We have significantly more training in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders than any other profession in the county which sometimes leads to school teams over expecting supports or undervaluing what we are able to provide.*

- *The lack of structure in our program sometimes makes it challenging to deliver services. We have a referral system that is not used by most WBSWs and is in need of adjusting for the real life scenarios of working in schools.*
- *Complete staff buy-in and being able to gain information and referrals from staff.*
- *I do feel like our role is not completely defined, and most staff do not know our role.*

Lack of sufficient resources and mental health support for some (n=5)

- *Limited resources, meeting complex needs including academic, social, emotional and behavioral challenges that oftentimes require multifaceted support approaches.*
- *Not enough people to execute the needed interventions and do so consistently.*
- *Unable to fully and completely offer the comprehensive support the student needs.*

- *Students are often managing challenges that we are not able to address in the school setting (significant ongoing trauma, community violence, etc).*
- *There are not sufficient options in the area for drug/substance use. rehabilitation/detox for students that have Medicaid or no insurance at all.*

Better way to document or track student progress (n=5)

- *The need for a place to organize notes in one place. Documentation is a problem.*
- *Lack of evidenced-based tools to implement and provide services to students.*
- *Lack of meaningful data to evaluate efficacy of the work with students and to make improvements to practices.*

Other challenges (n=3)

- *Difficult to split time among two schools, especially in different parts of county.*
- *Lack of dedicated space to see students and phone to communicate with families.*
- *First year in a school is a learning process.*

Suggestion: Add more social workers (n=6)

- *We are more effective when we are not stretched too thin or trying to balance too many cases. -More social worker will help us be able to make a greater impact.*
- *WBSWs should be considered for elementary schools. -Add more to middle schools.*
- *My school also desperately needs a social worker for students with an IEP, as those students are falling through the cracks.*

Other suggestions (N=8)

- *It is hard to be out of the building for three hours each week to attend the PLC. Additionally, I think that the PLC would be more effective if it were broken into small groups to collaborate for case consultation.*
- *More clinical support, provide a basic framework to schools, collaboration with police, additional supervisors, more mental health staff.*

WBSW Feedback: Barriers to Reaching Students (N=25)

Greatest barriers to reaching students in need as reported by WBSWs

Attendance/Truancy (n=9)

- *Students with attendance problems are difficult to reach and they typically are the ones who need services the most.*
- *Often our students who need support are the most reluctant to talk and skip school frequently.*
- *Frequently I will engage with a student in need of services and then they are very inconsistent with attendance.*

Parent consent (n=7)

- *Parents not engaged or interested in getting their child connected to services.*
- *Mental health stigma significantly impacts parents' comfortability in their children accessing mental health services, particularly where they perceive the information may be part of the student record.*
- *In some instances, parents decline services, and this has been a barrier for those students.*

Insufficient time and availability (n=6)

- *Limited days at one school makes it difficult to truly be part of a school community.*
- *Time is the biggest barrier. Having more Social Workers would help.*
- *One of my focus schools is a higher needs school and more support is need; however, I only have so much time and space on my caseload.*

Other barriers (n=10)

- *Location of detox programs for student under the age of 18.*
- *Many students who need support do not communicate in English and need support in their native language.*
- *Not enough resources in the community to address the high therapeutic need.*
- *Staff's knowledge of the process and how to gain services.*



Findings

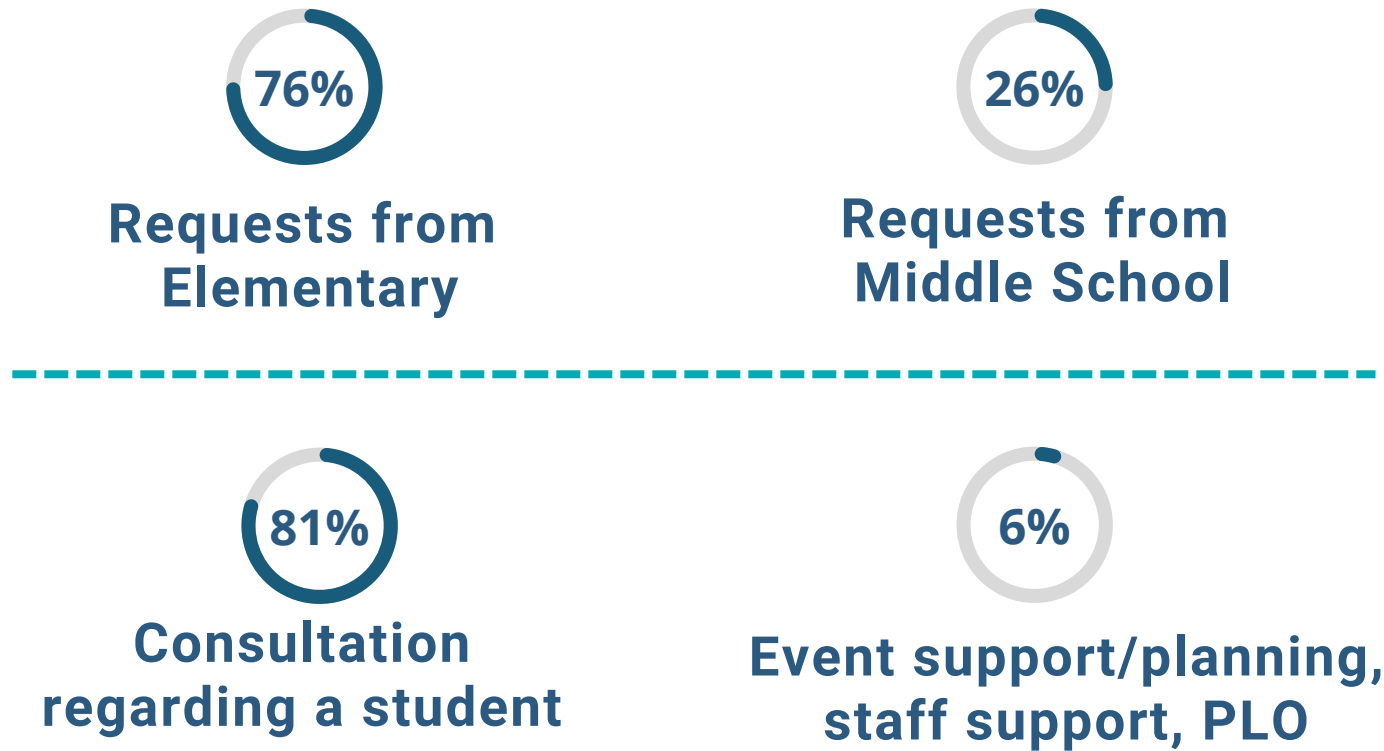
In an open-ended survey question asking for the greatest barrier(s) to reaching students in need, WBSWs identified three main themes. This highlights additional challenges WBSWs face when trying to address students needing support.

- **Attendance and truancy:** students who are not attending school or classes are difficult to reach and typically are the ones who need services the most. Additional responses added that students don't want to meet at lunch and WBSWs were not able to take them out of instructional time.
- **Parental consent:** getting parents to consent, plus some were not engaged, had a stigma towards mental health services, or perceived the information shared with the WBSW would be part of their student's record.
- **Insufficient time and availability:** limited time at a school (such as twice a week) makes it difficult to reach students in need and also to do outreach.



Results: Requests for WBSW services during the 2023–2024 school year

151 Requests for Services by WBSWs



87 (54%) of All Non-Focus Schools Submitted Requests



Findings

All non-focus schools without an on-site dedicated WBSW (i.e., all elementary schools, 19 middle schools, and special schools) had access to a WBSW assigned to their cluster. School staff could submit a request for services, which were attended to by the assigned WBSW or, if applicable, an RJ Instructional Specialist also assigned to the cluster as part of the same support team.

An analysis of request data from the 2023–2024 school year revealed a total of 151 requests for services provided by WBSWs. The majority of these requests (81%) were for student consultations, with elementary schools accounting for 76% of all requests.

These requests came from 87 schools (54% of all non-focus schools). Although most of the requesting schools submitted one request (61%), a considerable portion of the 87 schools submitted more than one request (39%), with nine schools submitting more than four requests.

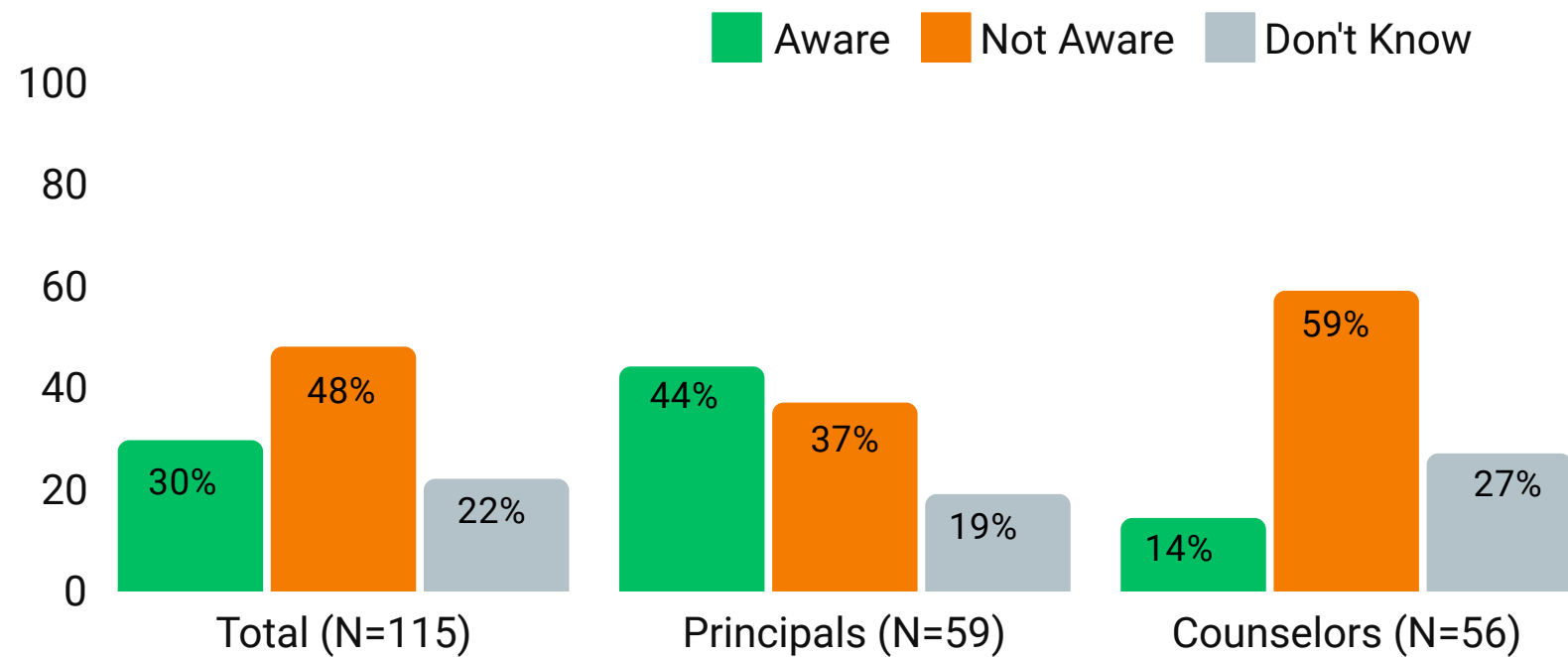
- Request data was as of 5/29/2024



Results: Elementary & MS Principal and Counselor Survey (N=115)

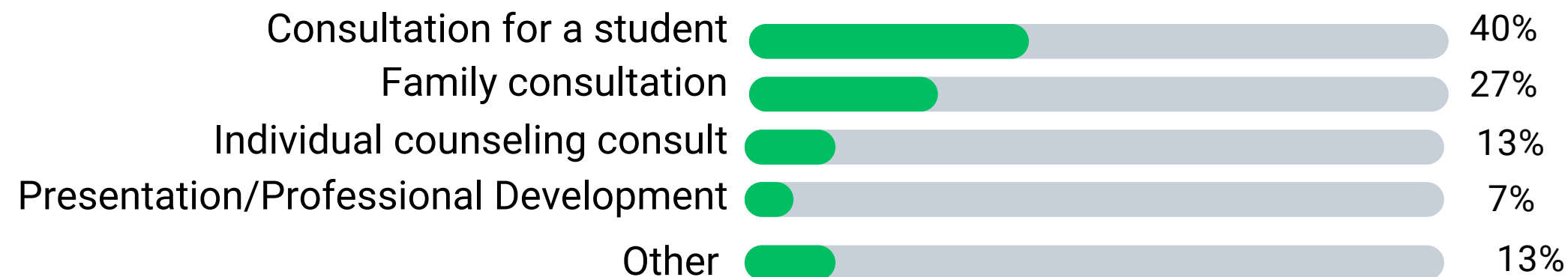
Percentages of reported awareness of the process to request WBSW support

Percentage Aware of Process to Request WBSW support or consultation



Note: Elementary School (N=102)
Middle School (N=13)

Reasons for WBSW Request among those who Personally Submitted a Request (N=15)



Findings

When principals and counselors in non-focus schools were asked if they were aware of the current process to request WBSW support or consultation, fewer than one-third (30%) answered affirmatively and almost one-fourth (22%) were not sure; 48% indicated they were not aware. This compares to 54% of the non-focus school data actually submitting a request (shown on the prior page).

- A higher proportion of principals were aware of the process to request WBSW support compared to counselors (44% compared to 14%).
- Most of the requests, reported by 15 principals and counselors who personally made a request, were for a consultation for a student (40%) or family (27%).
- Although not represented in the graphs, one-fifth (19%) of principals learned about this process through a director or Associate Superintendent, while other principals and counselors discovered it through various staff.

Among those aware of the process and responded to the survey question (N=31), the majority (81%) agreed they had a clear understanding of how to make a request, and 58% had a clear understanding about when to initiate the request (not shown).



Results: Elementary & MS Principal and Counselor Survey (N=15)

Percentages indicating satisfaction and helpfulness with requests

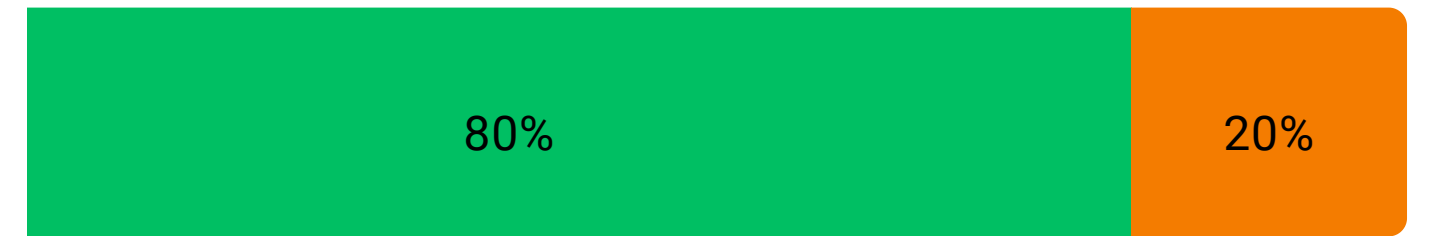


Findings

Respondents who indicated they personally make a request for services provided by a WBSW were asked their satisfaction with the request process and helpfulness of the service provided. Among those who personally made a request and responded (N=15), 80% were satisfied with the response time. Although the majority of respondents reported they were satisfied with the process for submitting a request (67%) and 62% found the service provided as helpful, 33% and 38% reported they were not satisfied or found it not helpful. It is notable that only 15 respondents answered these questions.

■ Satisfied ■ Not satisfied

Response time after submitting a request

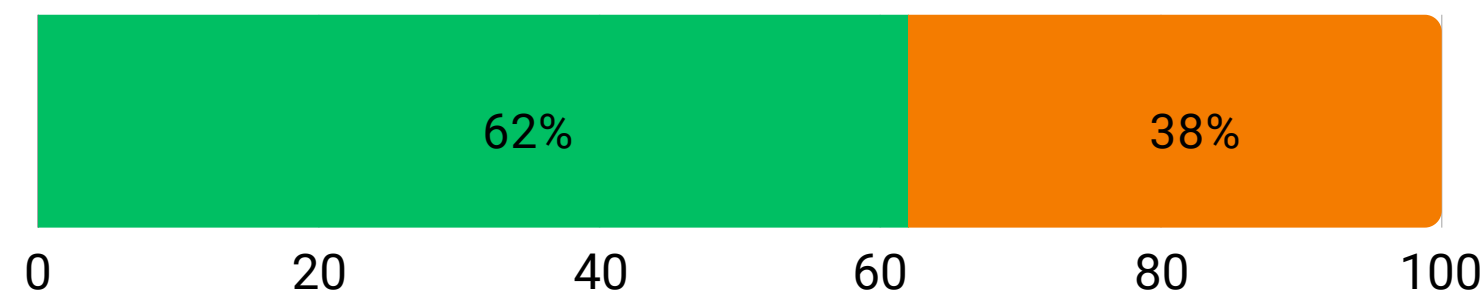


Process for submitting a request



■ Helpful ■ Not helpful

The service provided



Principal and Counselor Feedback

Verbatim responses on the successful aspects and challenges with the implementation of WBSW provided supports and services

In an open-ended survey question, principals and counselors who made a request, described the most successful aspects and challenges with the implementation of supports and services provided by WBSWs. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Successful aspects of having access to a WBSW (N=25)

WBSW was an additional support and resource (n=18)

- *To provide feedback and skills for students that we cannot reach.*
- *It gives us an unbiased opinion and new strategies to implement.*
- *Having an expert to review and observe a student's case is important to our collaborative and problem-solving process to support students' social emotional well-being.*
- *Having a think partner.*
- *They are able to bring a different lens and suggest supports that we're not always aware of.*

WBSW worked with students and families (n=11)

- *WBSW was able to build a relationship with the student.*
- *They provide uninterrupted consistent support for the student they are working with.*
- *It provides an option to help students and parents who need support beyond what we can provide here.*
- *Provides support to most at risk/top tier students; Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)/Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) support, behavior strategies, and counseling support directly to students.*

Challenges with implementation of services provided by WBSWs (N=18)

Limited availability, stretched thin, takes too long (n=11)

- *Our WBSW is serving multiple schools and gets overbooked throughout the school year. I really do not think it is their fault. [WBSW] is being stretched too thin.*
- *Unfortunately, they are all so overworked that were unable to really help with the second request.*
- *It took a long time for someone to come out and they had to reschedule several times.*
- *Waiting a long time to get someone to our building to observe and/or provide consultation.*

Lack of clarity regarding services available or request process (n=7)

- *I was never trained/told about how to request support from a WBSW, but I was able to find out through other staff staff. This is a serious oversight for elementary school counselors.*
- *The role of the social worker is still unclear. It would be helpful to have more clarity around what different supports the social workers are able to provide compared to what school counselors and therapists are providing.*

Did not receive the support we needed (n=6)

- *The student had an IEP and the coordination between special education and social workers was challenging.*
- *As soon as you mention a child has an IEP, it shuts down the support for the child.*
- *I had hoped WBSW would take lead with ongoing communication and supports for family.*
- *Systematic gatekeeping to support my students and families with significant need.*

Principal and Counselor Feedback

Verbatim responses on the suggestions for improving effectiveness of services

In an open-ended survey question, all principals and counselors (N=115) could make suggestions to improve the process or impact of services provided. The following themes were identified, along with illustrative verbatim comments.

Suggestion: Provide better awareness and communication surrounding availability of WBSW services (n=40)

- Suggestions for where to communicate the process and services included: at an A&S meeting, dashboard of county-wide services, provide a list of resources at the beginning of school year, have WBSWs reach out to the individual schools, share a presentation or video with counselors, communicate at an AP2/Internship training.
- *I was not informed about these services provided. Making the communication more clear about what the services are and who can use them would be helpful. Giving some examples of how to use the social worker and cases where it would be beneficial to reach out to a social worker would be helpful.*
- *More information on the referral/request process, what types of services the social workers can provide, etc.*

- *My school does not have a parent community coordinator, social worker, or more than a 1.0 school counselor. We would love to have access from a WBSW!*
- *I've yet to request a social worker because I'm not sure what else a social worker could offer that is different than a PPW or PCC. I searched on MCPS's website and there is no information about requesting social workers for elementary schools. I am an RJ coach.*
- *I'm just so confused about this. I heard that MCPS has social workers, but nobody has taught me how to ask for a consult, or who these people ever are. It's frustrating as a school based staff member to not know what your resources are or where to find them!*

Suggestion: Provide additional WBSW coverage or assignment to a school (n=11)

- *Having WBSWs assigned to one school will be helpful and allowing them to see more than one student.*
- *It would be very helpful to have a proactive relationship with a WBSW at the central level, similar to being assigned a PPW or school psychologist. Every single school should have this in place, not just schools with profiles that demand it.*

- *Having assigned social workers with regular check -ins would be helpful. The WBSW would know the school, the families, and ways to support. Having to submit a request and wait for a response is not helpful. There is no relationship established.*
- *This program is not accessible to elementary schools as readily as it should be.*
- *My school does not have a WBSW.*
- *Staff every school with at least one!*



Findings from this evaluation were very positive and support the continued implementation of services by school WBSWs. Feedback from principals and SWBT staff in focus schools (i.e., those with on-site WBSWs) revealed key services provided by WBSWs are crucial and important, and were perceived as making an impact on students' well-being. However, challenges experienced by staff in both focus and non-focus schools, as well as among WBSWs, indicate that implementation adjustments may be needed to ensure optimum use of the WBSW role.

Reported Supports and Services Provided by WBSWs

WBSWs provided a range of services to both students and staff. According to interviewed principals and surveyed SWBT staff in focus schools, as well as self-reports by WBSWs, direct therapeutic services, especially those who have critical needs (i.e., Tier 3) and students in crisis, were delivered to students. Principals in small group interviews reported that WBSWs' qualifications and expertise uniquely positioned them to provide Tier 3 supports and mental health care. It also was reported that WBSWs frequently supported students waiting for outside mental health services to become available. Some principals noted that their WBSW also met with students during intake meetings and when returning from suspension. Additionally, WBSWs met with students in group settings based on student need or characteristics. Most surveyed WBSWs reported that they provided Tier 1 and 2 mental health awareness (90%), and mindfulness and coping skills (86%) to students, among other topics. In addition to connecting with students, principals and SWBT staff reported that WBSWs built relationships with families, connected them to necessary resources, and had the ability to follow-up. Staff indicated that English and Spanish bilingual WBSWs were especially helpful for communicating with Spanish-speaking parents and understanding cultural reluctance towards mental health support.

According to interviewed principals and open-ended staff survey responses, WBSWs actively participated in their SWBT, other school teams, and provided consultation to staff. They collaborated closely with counselors, Bridge to Wellness staff, and other school mental-health staff. Nearly all (93%) surveyed SWBT staff reported that collaboration with staff worked well, and 95% agreed that the WBSW was viewed as part of the school community. Professional learning opportunities provided to staff by WBSWs varied among schools. In a survey question, about one-fourth (24%) of SWBT staff rated the professional learning did not work well, citing either its absence or their lack of awareness about it. This may have been due to the limited availability of the WBSW, who had to keep up with the demand for student consultations, while only being at the school twice a week in the case of middle schools. Additionally, some principals were unaware SWBTs could offer professional learning, some noting that other staff could provide this. The delivered professional learning topics reported by most of the WBSWs were trauma-related (45%), parent and community engagement (38%), and self-care (35%). Most SWBT staff who responded to the survey agreed that they understood the role of the WBSW (91%) and the differences with other SWBT staff (88%). All (100%) of WBSWs agreed they understood their role (41% strongly agreed). Fewer than half (44%) of middle school SWBT staff agreed that students were aware of WBSW services due to the limited schedule of the WBSW at the school.

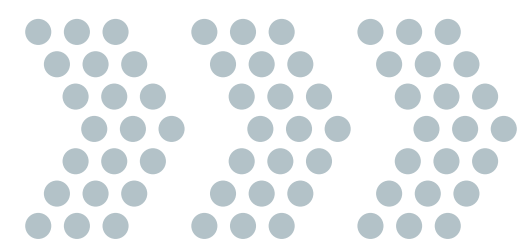


Experiences with Services and Supports Provided by WBSWs

Principals were especially very positive about services provided by their on-site WBSW, declaring them invaluable and essential. They strongly advocated for maintaining the position and expanding it if possible. Some principals expressed concern that the difficulty in quantifying the WBSW's direct impact, would jeopardize the continuation of the position. All interviewed principals rated the presence of a WBSW at their school as important, with 90% rating them extremely important. Similarly, nearly all surveyed SWBT staff (97%) reported it was extremely (83%) or very important (14%) to keep a WBSW in their school, and 95% agreed they provided important services. Principals remarked that the WBSW was a trusted adult for students and an expert in providing services and connections to resources beyond what other staff could offer. Most surveyed SWBT staff reported that the WBSW met the requests for services (93%), but not necessarily the overall need (86%) given the high demand; a sentiment also shared by principals. Some principals in small group interviews reported having a good referral system in place; 78% of SWBT staff who answered the survey reported their referral process worked well, but only 21% rated it extremely well, and 27% reported it did not work well. **Overall, the biggest challenge mentioned in principal interviews and staff surveys, was the limited availability of WBSWs and the high demand for their tiered student support.** An additional reported challenge was that students with IEPs, who also needed social worker supports and services, did not have access, highlighting the need to fill this gap in services for these students. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of WBSWs disagreed that the referral process was equitable, explaining that students with IEPs were not able to receive services. This was also a challenge mentioned by principals in small group interviews. Additionally, some staff expressed a lack of clarity about the full scope of the WBSW role (e.g., providing professional learning and Tier 1 services), and some principals called for more communication regarding how WBSWs could best be utilized, or that the WBSW keep them informed of brewing situations and their schedules.

Perceived Impacts of Services and Supports Provided by WBSWs

Principals and SWBT staff in focus schools expressed several areas they believed were positively impacted by the services provided by WBSWs. Staff remarked that WBSWs provided essential services and supports to students, especially those needing Tier 3 support. By doing so, they helped avoid crisis such as suicide, conflicts, and suspendable behaviors. They also alleviated counselors' heavy workloads by providing direct therapeutic services to students, allowing counselors to focus on their other responsibilities. Additionally, principals reported that students' overall well-being and attendance among students served were positively impacted. They also believed that the school climate benefited from having the WBSW as a resource and trusted adult available for students. Nearly nine of ten SWBT staff who responded to the survey agreed that the WBSW services had a positive impact on student well-being (93%), school climate (92%), and student behavior (87%).



Experiences among WBSWs with providing tiered services to schools

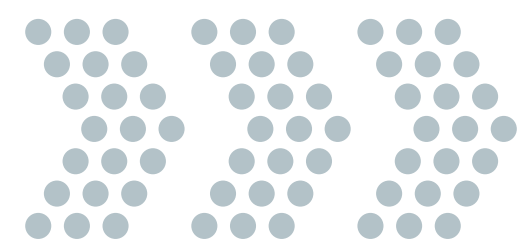
Although the majority of the surveyed WBSWs reported that their student caseload was just right (69% middle school and 56% high school), 31% of middle school and 38% of high school WBSWs reported it was too much to manage. In the same WBSW survey, all respondents agreed they had a clear understanding of their role, and its differences between other SWBT staff; fewer than half (41%) strongly agreed they had a clear understanding of their role. A large majority agreed that they were supported by their principals (94%), felt part of the school community (88%), and were able to meet requests (83%). However, 40% of WBSWs disagreed that they were able to meet the overall need for services or that most students were aware of their access to these services. Most WBSWs reported that collaboration with their schools' SWBT (91%) and the use of SWALP (90%) worked well; although 21% and 29% respectively strongly agreed. Just over half (56%) reported that the process for monitoring student progress worked well and 33% reported the pre-post student intervention tool worked well. WBSWs highlighted staff collaboration, making connections with students, providing counseling, seeing an impact on students, and serving as a staff resource as areas that worked well. Challenges included keeping up with the demand for services, issues with the schools' referral system, lack of clarity with the WBSW role, and the need for a better tracking and monitoring system of students in their caseload.

Experiences with requests for WBSW services among staff in non-focus schools

Only 30% of elementary and middle school principals and counselors in non-focus schools who responded to the survey were aware of their access to WBSW services. In an open-ended survey question, the top suggestion (40 of 115 respondents) was to effectively communicate the availability of these services and provide clear instructions on how to submit a request. Data records showed there were 151 requests submitted from 87 schools for services provided by WBSWs in 2023–2024; 54% of non-focus schools submitted a request. A large majority of the requests were for consultation regarding a student (81%) and came from elementary schools (76%). According to those surveyed who personally submitted a request (N=15), 80% were satisfied with the response time, and 67% satisfied with the request process; 62% reported the services they received were helpful. Having an additional support, resource, and someone to work with individual students were the most successful aspects named by those who made a request for services provided by WBSWs. Challenges included limited availability, lack of clarity regarding the WBSW's role or request process, and that the support they received was not what they needed.



Recommendations



The following recommendations are based on data collected through small group interviews with principals, surveys of SWBT staff in focus schools, surveys of WBSWs, and counselors and principals from elementary and middle schools in non-focus schools. These recommendations aim to optimize the implementation of services and support from WBSWs and to enhance program improvement.

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

Positive feedback from staff on the impact on students **support the need for continuation of the WBSW position**. Furthermore, staff and WBSWs reported a need for **additional WBSWs** both at their focus schools and throughout the district. Pending funding, an increase in WBSW positions would better meet the demand for services and supports, and allow WBSWs to more effectively manage their caseloads and other responsibilities. An allocation of additional WBSWs in schools with large enrollment or high student needs should be considered.

Additionally, **increasing the presence of WBSWs** at their focus schools beyond their current schedule would allow them to provide more services, be more readily available, and make deeper connections with students and staff. Two areas for consideration to facilitate their availability are:

1. Reduce the frequency of the weekly WBSW PLCs so they are not out of their school for a full day each week. Half-day PLCs or alternating weeks could be considered.
2. Increase the number of days WBSWs are in focus middle schools from the current two days a week. However, this may require an examination of available funds.

2 Identify and share guidance on ways to address the gap in WBSW support services for students, especially for students with IEPs.

Staff expressed concern that students in need of social worker supports and services, but **who also have IEPs, do not have access to services provided by WBSWs**. Continue to **explore ways to address this gap in services**, such as collaborating with other offices and school administrators to ensure all students have access to services. Clear procedures on who can and cannot access WBSWs should be documented and uniformly shared with all WBSWs, school administrators, and appropriate SWBT staff.



Recommendations



3 Strengthen the communication regarding services available by WBSWs and create intentional mechanisms for ongoing communication between WBSWs and school administrators.

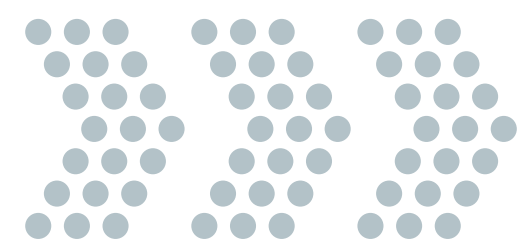
From principal interviews and follow-up open-ended SWBT survey responses, **some school staff were unaware of WBSWs' capacity to provide professional learning, Tier 1 services, or other support.** Additionally, some staff expressed **a need to better understand the types of services WBSWs can offer.** This could be addressed through a meeting between school administrators, the SWBTs, and the WBSW team (e.g., at an administrator or SWBT PLC) where expectations and examples could be shared. It is worth noting that some schools prefer that professional learning and Tier 1 services be the responsibility of other staff in order for WBSWs to focus on direct student services.

Additionally, almost half (48%) of the surveyed principals and counselors from elementary and **non-focus middle schools indicated they were not aware of the process to request support** provided by WBSWs and requested more communication regarding this availability. To **assure all schools know they have access to services provided by WBSWs and how to access them,** consider providing information about WBSWs availability and request process directly to schools (e.g., schedule introduction sessions, create a welcome video, etc.) Additionally, share ways in which the WBSW can support schools and how they differ from school's PPW, PCC, counselor, and psychologist.

While many interviewed principals and surveyed SWBT staff praised the communication from their WBSWs, some highlighted a need for more consistent and frequent communication. SWBTs should **regularly update their administrator and appropriate staff regarding their weekly schedules,** while also **communicating student concerns without breaching student confidentiality.** Sharing best practices among WBSWs and school administrators could facilitate improved communication practices.

4 Explore additional options to strengthen the methods for monitoring student progress.

Although 90% of WBSWs reported that SWALP worked well (21% strongly agreed), only 56% reported that the process for monitoring student progress worked well, and 33% reported the pre-post student intervention tool worked well, indicating there is room for improvement. WBSWs explained the tools do not clearly and accurately capture student progress. **Further exploration with WBSWs on what gaps and needs exist in order to strengthen this program component is recommended.**



CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the results in this report, the position of Well-Being Social Worker (WBSW) should be continued. Findings demonstrated that there is strong support from secondary administrators and school staff for maintaining WBSWs, and that the supports and services provided are fulfilling a need at the schools. The WBSW positions align with the Well-being and Family Engagement pillar of the MCPS Strategic Plan.