

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Primary Goal - To screen and place students requiring specialized services in an educational setting where they might have opportunity to achieve maximum benefit from the educational program

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost Per Student</u>
5.1	1,511	\$586,465	\$388

Level K - 12

Objective Evaluations

	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
Number of students counseled individually	288	280	270
a. Percent of teachers reporting positive change	94%	92%	93%
b. Percent of parents reporting positive change	92%	93%	91%
c. Number counseling group contacts	844	832	851
d. Number of individual behavior programs established	206	214	200
e. Number of individual parent contacts	3319	3314	3324
f. Number of group-parent contacts	246	75*	250
Number of evaluations completed	445	451	468
a. new cases	229	234	263
b. triennial evaluations	216	217	205
Referrals to outside agencies	99	96	112
Special class placements	99	99	90
Child abuse cases	36	39	21
In-service training meetings	17	16	8
Total numbers of students served (unduplicated)	1511	1456	1380

*Reduction reflects parenting fair not held in 2004-2005. The Parenting Fair is held every other year.

Subjective Evaluations

Parents complete surveys regarding their satisfaction with psychological services at several points during the year. The first contact that a family has with a district psychologist is typically at kindergarten screening, and the parents are asked to complete an evaluation of their kindergarten screening experience. Since the psychologists responsible for organizing the screening and meeting with each

parent, the parents' feedback is a reflection of the psychologists' effectiveness in this **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES** (cont.)

area. The refinements to the kindergarten screening process have resulted in positive feedback from parents, and these are forwarded to the Director of Pupil Services. Parents also have the opportunity to provide feedback regarding their satisfaction with psychological services when the district sends out surveys to parents whose children (both identified and non-identified) have received counseling during the school year. The parents of identified students are sent surveys each spring. Their responses not only reflect their satisfaction with the IEP counseling that the psychologist provides, but also their satisfaction with the special education program as a whole. The psychologists' regular consultation with the special education teachers, regular education teachers, and related services providers helps the process run smoothly and respond to whatever problems arise in a timely fashion. Parents reported a great deal of satisfaction with the psychological service provided to their children, both identified and non-identified.

More informal evaluation of psychological services occurs on an ongoing basis. Psychologists receive daily phone calls and emails from parents and are able to establish solid relationships with parents that last from year to year. Meetings with parents occur when a new referral is received, an evaluation has been done, and when the child's program is being reviewed. Psychologists are typically involved with families during transitional times for the students, whether moving from one level to the next or changing placements within a level. The involvement of the psychologist decreases anxiety and facilitates the process. Parents of non-identified students also contact the building psychologist on a regular basis with questions regard their child's behavioral difficulties, reactions to stressful situations, or academic struggles. The informal feedback from parents is very positive as the psychologists are typically viewed as being responsive to the family's needs and helpful to families who are trying to find resources for their child.

Finally, psychologists conducted two parent fairs this year – one at Latham Ridge and one at Shaker Junior High School. These fairs allowed large numbers of parents to obtain information about specific questions they had about their children, and parents also had the opportunity to ask questions and get referral information. The parents' feedback from these fairs was extremely positive, and many parents took handouts relating to their areas of concern. This has been a good way to make parents aware of the range of services that the psychologists provide and to begin establishing positive relationship with them. Parents were very appreciative of this opportunity.

Teachers are the most frequent users of psychological services. Requests for direct and indirect support continue to be ongoing. Consultation, counseling and assessment are most often requested, but information related to outside resources and effective strategies for dealing with students with challenging behaviors have increased in frequency. Psychologists are often asked to serve as a mediator with families and

school personnel.

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The relationship between teachers and the school psychologists in their respective buildings is one where the psychologist serves as a permanent consultation to colleagues. Although, many contacts are formalized through the PST/CST process, the majority of contacts with the teachers are informal and focus on student needs and joint meetings with parents, principals, counselors and Pupil Services staff. An informal assessment of effectiveness is the high frequency with which the psychologists are solicited for advice and recommendations. Evaluation, consequently, is an ongoing feedback given directly to the school psychologist, principal and the Director and Assistant Director of Pupil Services.

Principals evaluate the effectiveness of the program through ongoing observation of the psychologists' performances during PST meetings, Crisis Response Teams, Child Study Teams, parent conferences and consultation with staff and principals. Input is sought by the principal from the staff and parents through informal feedback of the psychologists' effectiveness. Principals continue to use the psychologists as resources for consultation, especially regarding students with significant learning and behavioral needs.

Students have historically valued the support given to them by the district psychologists as evidenced by the large number of self-referrals and positive feedback from parents, teachers and principals. For the small percentage of students who are reluctant to engage in counseling, there are many modifications to the standard practice of regular meetings. For example, sessions can be arranged on a less frequent basis, scheduled around favored classes, groups with selected friends, or on an as-needed voluntary basis. When provided with these options, students usually have a positive response as they are satisfied to have the opportunity to have meaningful input into the process and, consequently, will engage in counseling.

For the overwhelming majority of students, both IEP and non-IEP counseling, high compliance with scheduled sessions and in-session behavior are the most rewarding indicators of student response to the program.

Building principals and administrators consult with psychologists on a regular basis about student needs. The psychologists serve as a resource for many issues such as behavior management, attention deficit disorders, discipline, child abuse, suicide, retention/acceleration, interpretation of standardized tests, family dynamics and accommodations for children's learning. Psychologists have the ability to consult on the latest trends using psychotropic medications with children because of their ability to consult with a district consulting psychiatrist. Psychologists also are called on frequently to function as liaisons between the District and our consulting psychiatrist in order to have high needs students receive psychiatric evaluations in a timely manner.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (cont.)

As co-chairs of the Crisis Response Team in buildings, the psychologists are involved in developing crisis plans, facilitating the crisis response teams and following up after crisis situations. The psychologists are important members of the Child Study Teams in each building. This has been an excellent way for psychologists to consult with faculty and staff about individual students while helping to design pre-referral interventions for students who are not yet in the special education system. Psychologists function as an essential member of the Pupil Service Team in each building and often consult with principals and administrators regarding PST issues. The principals recognize and respect the diverse roles and responsibilities of the psychologists. The psychologists are looked to as experts on current psychological research and developmental issues.

Teachers also frequently ask the building psychologist to assist with individual students, as well as to help design programs that deal with class discipline and/or school behavior issues. The teachers are increasing their understanding of the necessity of pre-referral interventions, and most are willing to work with the psychologist on academic and behavioral programs for their students. Over the past few years, the psychologists have begun to take a preventative role by providing this consultation. This good collaborative relationship helps to implement effective programs for individual students.

The psychologists continued to play an intricate role in their respective buildings by providing psychological services to support both identified and non-identified students. In addition to providing support to students, their role has also been highly beneficial to parents, teachers and administrators. The Psychology Department also continues to provide a comprehensive Internship program which has been well received by local colleges and universities, as well as from programs as far away as Northern Minnesota. The success of the program continues to be dependent upon the expertise and recruitment of the Psychologist Department, as well as district support. Lastly, the psychologists continue to participate on District committees.

At the high school, teachers and eleventh and twelfth grade students have been presenting lessons on Character Education to ninth and tenth grade students. These lessons provide effective interventions for students to address harassment by working within the existing social structure of the high school to bring about changes to help students feel more welcome, safe, supported and involved with their peers. These lessons incorporate strategies presented by student leaders to initiate positive social changes. These lessons have been well received and approved by the students as evidenced by the response from students, teachers, administrators and parents.