



Boston Public Schools Behavioral Health Services

Every child deserves a safe and supportive school.



Annual Report: 2025-2026

August 2026

The **Behavioral Health Services** department of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) is composed of licensed school psychologists supporting all BPS schools. Our mission is to ensure that BPS students have a safe and supportive school environment where they can be successful. There is a critical connection between behavioral health and well-being and academic success.

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Executive Summary

A Comprehensive Approach to District-Wide Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department within Boston Public Schools (BPS) is rooted in the core belief that behavioral health and well-being are fundamental to academic success. Our team of licensed school psychologists and graduate-level trainees delivers a continuum of care across all BPS schools. Guided by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Practice Model ([2020a](#)) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Safe and Supportive Schools Framework ([Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 69, § 1P](#); 2014), we provide vital prevention, early intervention, and intensive support at both the student and systems levels. These guiding principles drive **our mission to ensure that all BPS students have a safe and supportive school environment where they can thrive.**

Local Mission with a National Reach

While our primary mission is serving the Boston community, we take great pride in developing scalable frameworks that advance the field of school mental health and the profession of school psychology. We achieve this through authentic partnerships and active involvement with local, state (MSPA, MA DESE), and national (NASP, NNERPP) organizations. Our department is committed to disseminating outcomes in peer-reviewed and practice-focused outlets, including conferences, podcasts, and newsletters. BPS has been recognized as a leader in the field for universal behavioral health screening implementation by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA, 2019](#)) and integrated behavioral health services through our nationally recognized Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model ([Stanford, 2023](#)). In 2025, BPS became one of four districts nationwide to achieve [Exemplary Recognition](#), the highest endorsement of Excellence in School Psychological Services awarded by the NASP.



In 2025, BPS became one of four districts in the nation to achieve **Exemplary** status, the highest endorsement of **Excellence in School Psychological Services** awarded by the National Association of School Psychologists.

Message from Leadership

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

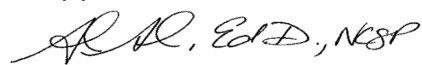
Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, BHS advanced critical systems that empower school psychologists to deliver equitable, high-quality behavioral health support for all students. In partnership with families, educators, and community organizations, BHS advanced culturally responsive practices that nurture student well-being and drive academic success. Amidst a rapidly evolving educational landscape, BHS continued to exercise resilience and advocacy to serve the greater Boston community.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

- In partnership with Boston University, BHS successfully graduated Cohort 3 of Project PROVIDE, a workforce development program that leverages mentorship, intern stipends, and comprehensive training to build a pipeline of highly qualified school mental health providers, defying federal funding interruptions.
- In October 2025, BHS launched the highly ranked Boston School Psychs Podcast in partnership with Timothy McIvor, NCSP, and founder of SchoolPsych.com. To date, we have produced 20 bi-weekly episodes on topics such as advocacy, leadership, equity, and more with guests from within the district and field.
- BHS partnered with Dr. Byron McClure, esteemed school psychologist and founder of School Psych AI, to co-develop a sequential arc of learning to guide the ethical adoption of AI across the full spectrum of school psychology practice. Preliminary findings point towards increased use, confidence, and skill and reduced administrative burden.

This work has been made possible by our deeply integrated partnerships, which challenge us to continuously improve.

In appreciation,



Andria Amador, Ed.D., NCSP

Senior Director of Behavioral Health Services, Boston Public Schools

BHS At a Glance: 2025-2026

104

School Psychologists

104.1 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of School Psychologists

- **89.1 FTE** (86%) assigned to one or more BPS schools.
- **15.0 FTE** (14%) serve special populations and provide compliance services.

10

Central Staff

- 4 Central Administrators,
- 1 Instructional Coach
- 1 Program & 2 Grant Managers
- 2 clerks

53

Graduate Trainees

- 9 School Psychology Interns (7 EdS; 2 PhD)
- 44 School Psychology Practicum Students
- 35 Field Supervisors

8

National Conference
Presentations

- 2025 Advancing School Mental Health Conference in Orlando, FL
- 2026 National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention in Chicago, IL



PART I: Our Department

Positioned within the BPS Office of Specialized Services, the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department is home to BPS school psychologists and their supervisors.

BHS Staffing

The figure below provides an organizational overview of BHS and the funding sources that sustain our work.

Figure 1. BHS Organizational Chart

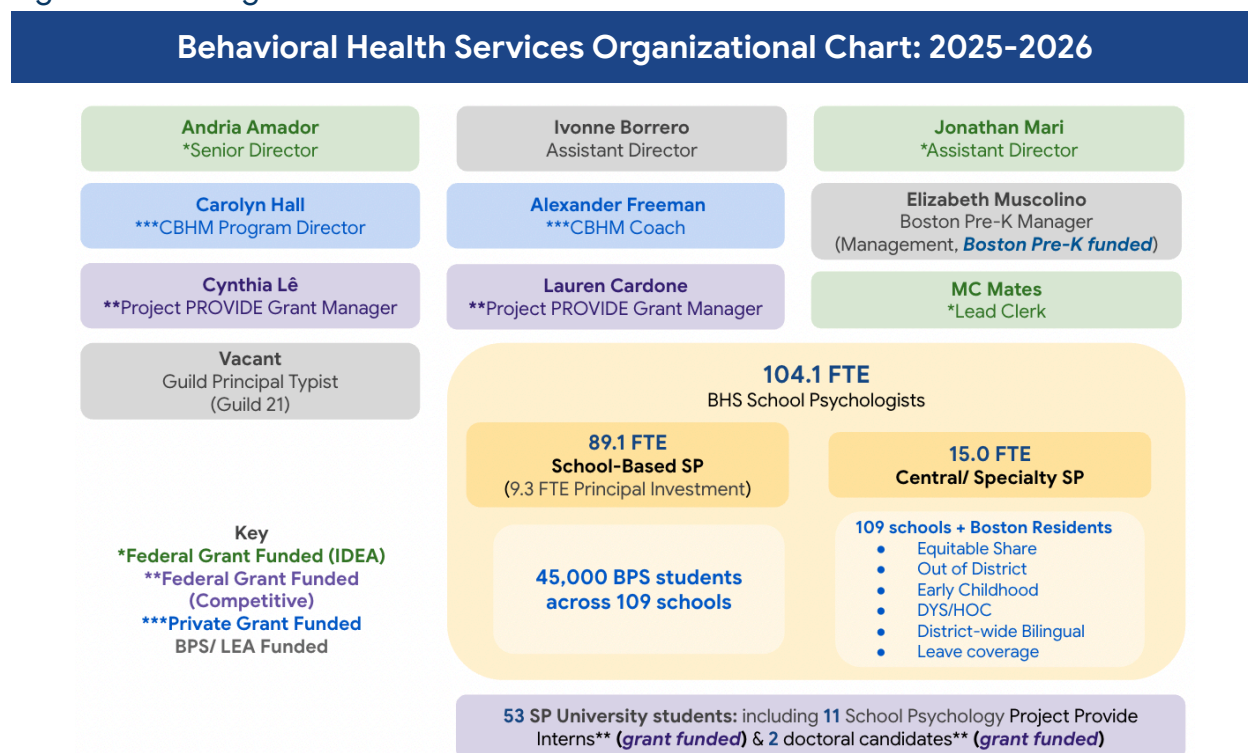
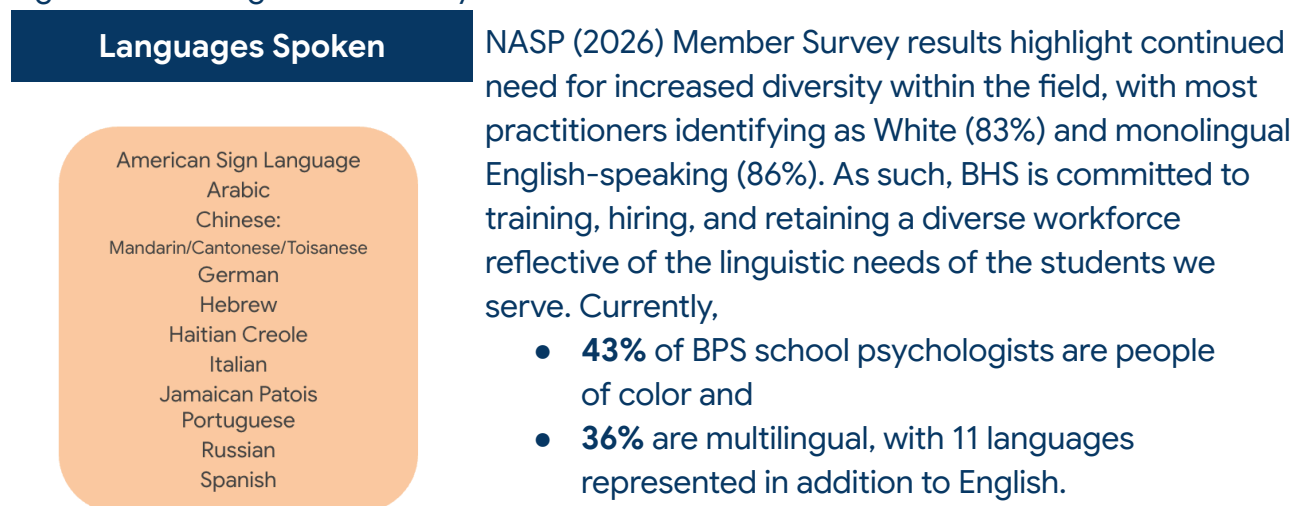


Figure 2. BHS Linguistic Diversity



Boston's Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model

BHS is proud to have created the **Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model (CBHM)**, a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework to facilitate top-tier mental and behavioral health (MBH) services for all BPS students. Rooted in the conviction that integrating behavioral health services within educational institutions cultivates secure and nurturing learning environments, the CBHM aims to optimize academic outcomes by addressing the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of every student.

Established in 2010, the model was developed through a collaborative effort between BHS, the esteemed Boston Children's Hospital, and the University of Massachusetts Boston School Psychology Program. The model promotes a continuum of evidence-based practices (EBP) and systematic data collection to assess their effectiveness using the principles of implementation science. Over the first decade (2012-2022), the CBHM was strategically rolled out across the district using a cohort model, adding about 10 additional schools per year, eventually reaching more than two-thirds of BPS schools (82/122, 86%) and serving over **30,000 students**.

Post COVID-19, BPS adopted an **integrated MTSS** approach to equitably support all students academically and behaviorally (I-MTSS Research Network, 2023). While the district no longer differentiates between CBHM and non-CBHM schools, core features of the initiative are observed in the work of BHS school psychologists (e.g., universal MBH screening, team and professional development facilitation, etc.) and our internal (e.g., Department of Social Emotional Learning & Instruction, Office of Social Work) and external (e.g., Boston School-Based Behavioral Health Collaborative) partners.

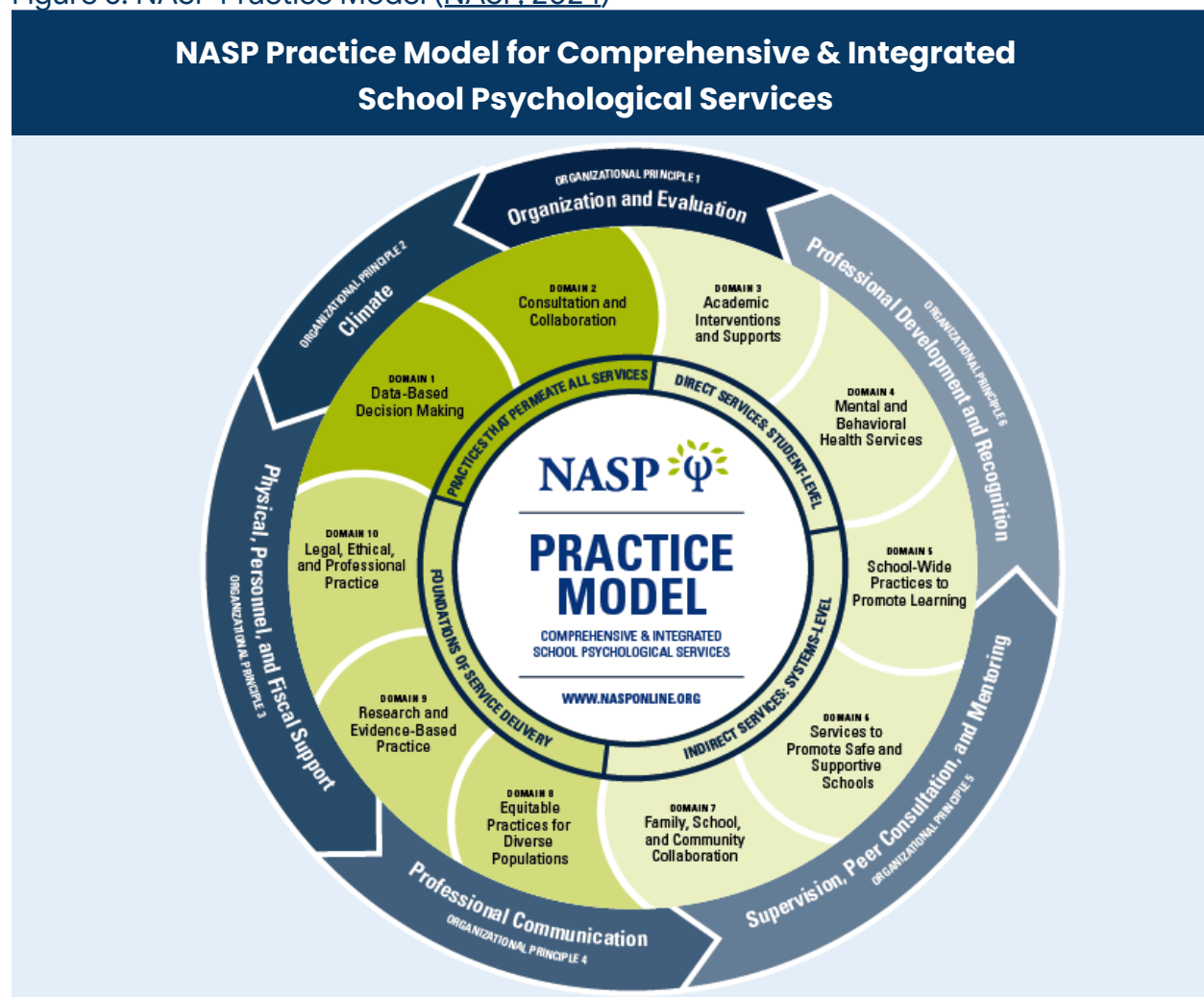


Expanded Role of School Psychologists

Introduced in 2010 and updated in 2020, the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Service, or the NASP Practice Model (NASP, 2020a; NASP, 2020b), outlines the field's position for the provision of school psychological services. These services are delivered through a tiered model that promotes behavioral health for all students across **Tier 1** (universal prevention), **Tier 2** (targeted early intervention), and **Tier 3** (intensive individualized services).

NASP Recommended Ratio: To provide a range of prevention, intervention, and intensive services across student and systems levels, NASP recommends a ratio of one school psychologist to five hundred students (1:500); However, lower ratios are warranted in settings characterized by high-needs populations, significant community stressors, and/or multi-site assignments (NASP, 2020b).

Figure 3. NASP Practice Model (NASP, 2024)



PART II: Services Provided

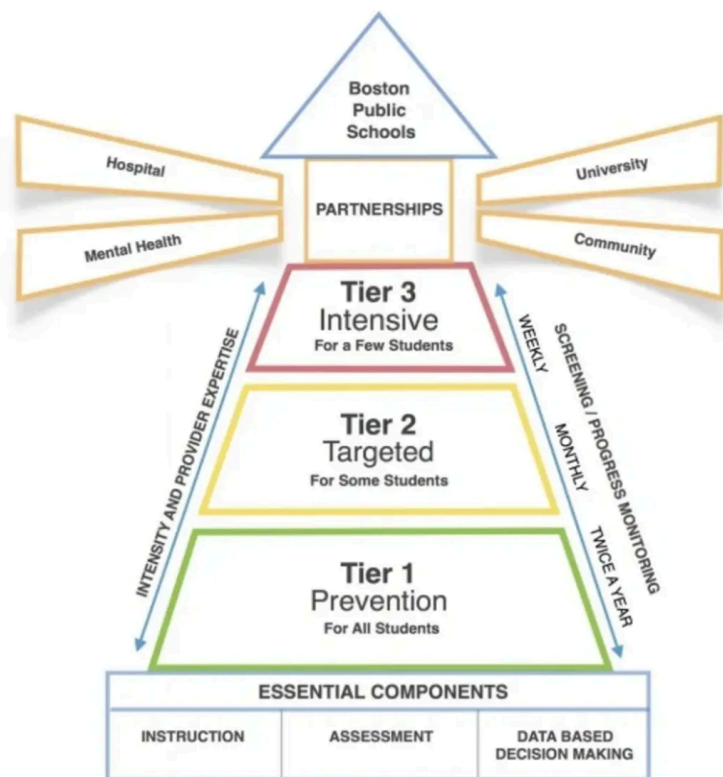
The CBHM provided a foundation for BPS school psychologists to practice the expanded role outlined by the NASP Practice Model (2020) and endorsed by the state's Safe and Supportive Schools Framework ([Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 69, § 1P](#); 2014).

MTSS for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B)

To meet the behavioral health needs of all students, BPS school psychologists provide a range of student and systems-level services through a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework.

Figure 4: MTSS for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B) Framework

Boston's MTSS-Behavioral Health Framework: Previously the "CBHM Lighthouse Model"



Tier 3 (Intensive): This year, school psychologists spent most of their time (**66%**) at the Tier 3 level, conducting special education evaluations, providing Individual Education Programs (IEP) and 504 counseling, and responding to crises.

Tier 2 (Targeted): School psychologists spent **19%** of their time providing Tier 2 services, primarily in the forms of consultation, Student Support Team (SST) meetings, and non-IEP counseling.

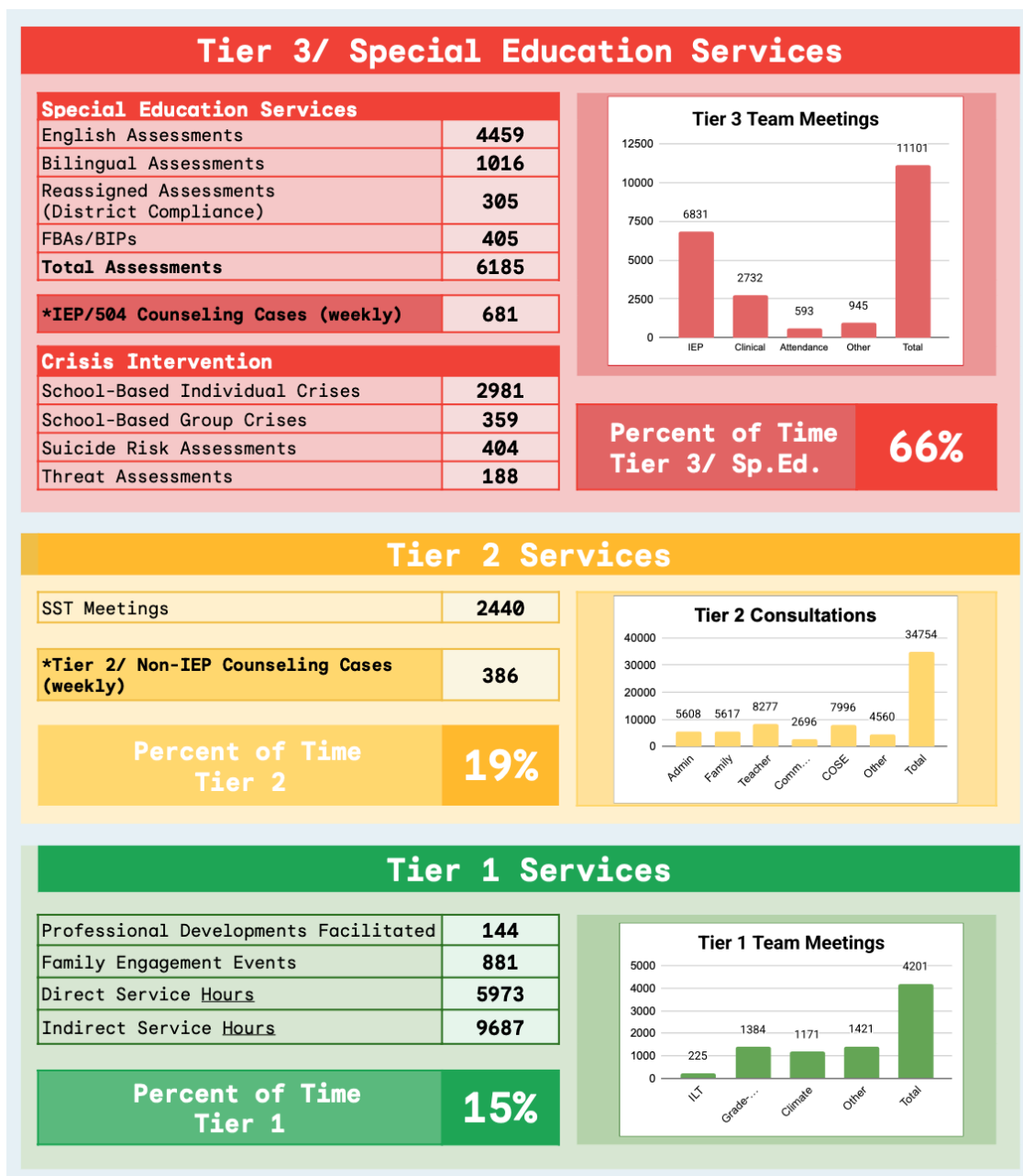
Tier 1 (Prevention): This year, the least amount of school psychologists' time (**15%**) was allocated to direct (e.g., SEL lessons, classroom support, etc.) and indirect (e.g., team facilitation, intervention planning Tier I activities).

Behavioral Health Services Department Year-End Reports

Each month, school psychologists track professional responsibilities performed across each of the three tiers of mental and behavioral health (MBH) services. Data is collected from 104 school psychologists who support 109 schools and early learning centers, as well as privately enrolled Boston youth. Each year, monthly reports are compiled into one Year-End Report.

Figure 5. Behavioral Health Services Department Year-End Report

BHS Year-End Report: 2025-2026



Universal Mental and Behavioral Health Screening

The *Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System, 2nd Edition* ([BIMAS-2](#); McDougal, et al., 2016) is the BPS-approved universal behavioral health screening tool. The BIMAS-2 is a brief, multi-informant measure of social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in children and adolescents 3 to 18 years old that is useful for both universal screening and progress monitoring within a multi-tiered framework.

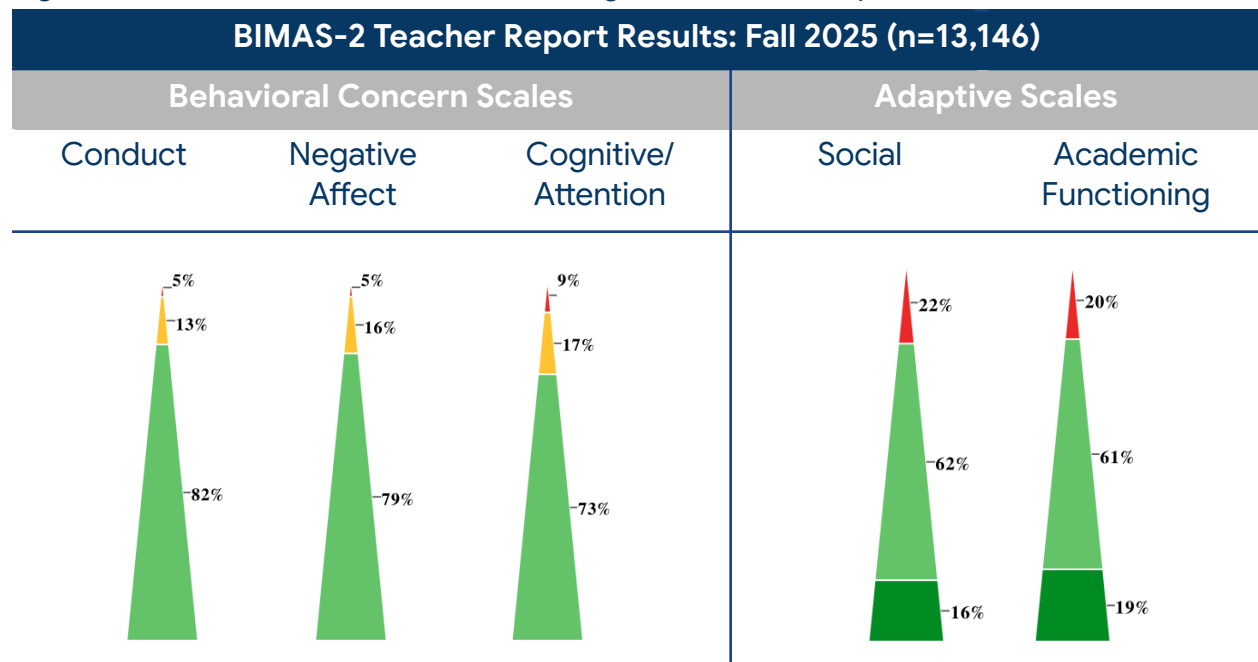
BHS has implemented biannual (fall and spring) screening via the BIMAS since Fall 2013. Over 18,000 ratings are completed by BPS teachers and students annually. This year,

- **13,146** ratings were completed by K-12 teachers,
- **1,044** ratings were completed by pre-K teachers, and an additional
- **4,522** ratings were completed by students aged 12 and older.

The BIMAS-2 is composed of five scales:

- **Three Behavioral Concerns:** Conduct, Negative Affect, Cognitive/Attention
 - Behavioral Concern results are classified as **Low Risk**, **Some Risk**, or **High Risk**.
- **Two Adaptive:** Social, Academic Functioning
 - Adaptive results are classified as **Strength**, **Typical**, and **Concern**.

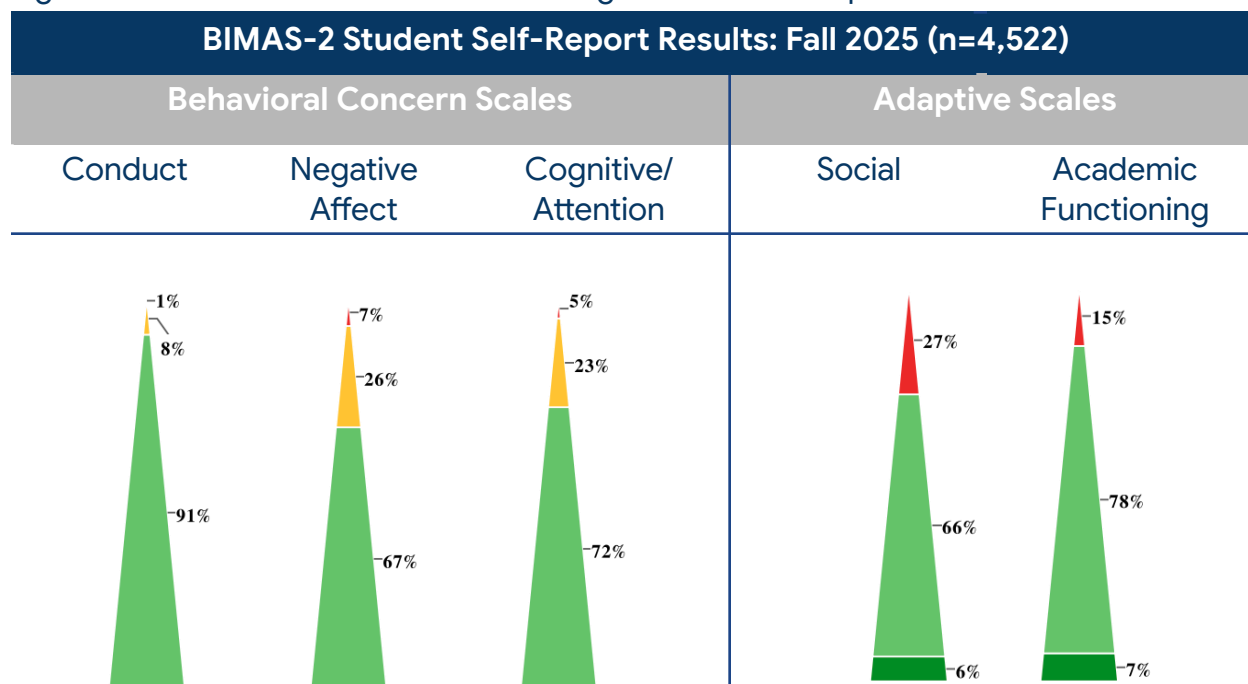
Figure 6. District-Wide Universal Screening K-12 Teacher Report Results: Fall 2025



Fall 2025 **K-12 Teacher Report results** show

- **1:5** students were identified as at risk for concerns related to conduct (18%), negative affect (19%), social (22%), and academic functioning (20%).
- **1:4** students were identified as at risk for cognitive/attention concerns (26%).

Figure 7. District-Wide Universal Screening Student Self-Report Results: Fall 2025



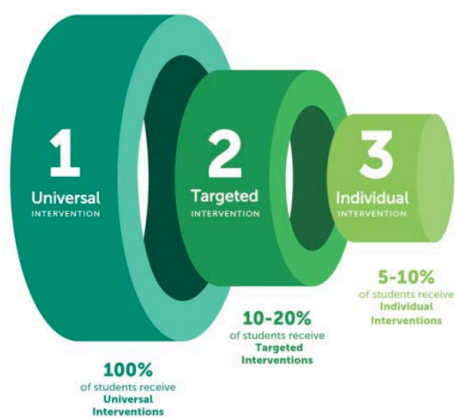
Fall 2025 **Student Self-Report (12+ years)** results show

- **1:10** students were classified at-risk for concerns related to conduct (9%)
- **1:7** students were at-risk in the academic functioning domain (15%)
- **1:4** students were at-risk in cognitive/attention (28%) and social (27%) domains
- **1:3** students were classified at-risk for negative affect (33%)

In BPS, BIMAS-2 results are used to monitor progress at the student, school, and district levels.

Figure 8. Universal Screening

Universal Assessment via BIMAS-2



- At the **district level**, BIMAS-2 data is used to inform program evaluation, professional development, and advocacy efforts.
- At the **school level** (Tier 1), BIMAS-2 data is used to identify class, grade, and school-wide trends.
- At the **student level**, BIMAS-2 data is used to identify strengths and areas for growth, inform interventions (Tier 2/3), and monitor progress.
 - Students flagged for **critical item #24**, regarding thoughts of self-harm, receive follow-up from a behavioral health provider within 24 hours.

PART III: Partnership Outcomes

BHS has a host of longstanding and deeply integrated partnerships designed to reduce the research-to-practice gap in education, implement best practices, and bring additional resources to the schools and students we serve.

Boston School-Based Behavioral Health Collaborative

Mission Statement

Led by the BPS, the Boston School-Based Behavioral Health Collaborative (BSBBHC) is a collective of state, city, and community-based organizations committed to promoting the behavioral health, well-being, and academic success of students. This is accomplished through best practices in therapeutic service delivery, prevention programming, advocacy, training, systems integration, family engagement, and collaboration.

This year, community-based partners provided preventative school-mental health services to over 1,000 students across more than 90 BPS schools.

25+

Agencies

This year, we welcomed new community mental health partners offering expanded school-based behavioral health supports.

300+

MH staff

More than 300 MH staff members and partners participate in the numerous PD offered throughout the year.

Annual BSBBHC Conference

In collaboration with in-kind support from Boston University (BU), the BSBBHC hosted more than 200 mental and behavioral health practitioners, including university trainees, to attend PD ranging from peer supervision practices to AI use in MH services, the use of play in social-emotional growth, and strengths-based practices.



University Training Program

To ensure that BPS can recruit highly trained school psychologists, BHS has an intensive workforce development strategic plan that includes robust partnerships with school psychology training programs. The Senior Director of Behavioral Health Services, BHS APPIC Training Directors, and the BHS University Supervision Committee share in developing and overseeing our University Training Program, in consultation with university staff from school psychology training programs across the nation.

The **Boston Public Schools School Psychology Training Program (BPSSPTP)** offers high-quality graduate student training in all competency areas defined by NASP, including special education evaluation, tiered counseling interventions, trauma-sensitive practices, teacher consultation, mental health supports, and systems-level support. This year, BHS supervised **53 school psychology trainees** (9 interns and 44 practicum students) overseen by **35 school psychologists**.

Specialist Level

BPSSPTP was founded in 2007 with a focus on training opportunities for graduate students at the practicum and specialist (Ed.S.) internship levels. Our goal is to provide an extraordinary learning experience that helps EdS interns become highly skilled practitioners. This training experience aligns with the **10-month school year**.

Doctoral Level

In 2020, the BPSSPTP was expanded to include doctoral students seeking licensure as Health Service Psychologists (HSPs). Effective July 2025, the HSP Program is coordinated through the **Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)** Match process (Member #2621). This **extended 12-month internship** attracts highly qualified candidates from competitive doctoral programs. This year, we graduated our **second** cohort of APPIC interns.

This year, BHS Graduate Trainees provided ~ **32,058 HOURS** of ADDITIONAL SUPPORT for **BOSTON'S STUDENTS, STAFF** and **FAMILIES!**

University Student Activities: NASP Exposure Project

In addition to providing more than 32,000 hours of direct student services, trainees participated in professional development and outreach initiatives, including the NASP Exposure Project. This nationwide initiative addresses school psychology workforce shortages and increases cultural and linguistic diversity in the profession (Barrett et al., 2019). This year, our university trainees reached 310 Boston Public Schools middle and high school students across 11 schools and one college and career fair.

BHS Research Team

The **BHS Research Team** advances research that strengthens the practice, effectiveness, and impact of school psychologists in the district and beyond. The BHS Research Team brings together BHS leadership, district-based practitioners, university trainees, and research partners from universities (e.g., Boston University, Northeastern University, UMass Boston, etc.), hospitals (e.g., Boston Children's Hospital), and professional organizations (e.g., BIMAS-2, SchoolPsych AI, etc.).

Guiding Values:

1. Stay grounded in the research needs of BHS,
2. Create meaningful research opportunities for partners and graduate students,
3. Foster regular communication between partners and BHS, and
4. Facilitate navigation of the district research review process and data sharing.

Annual Accomplishments

Solidifying team norms and establishing a research agenda at our inaugural BHS Research Retreat in Summer 2025 laid the foundation for many of this year's accomplishments.

Guided by our [BHS 2025-2028 Research Agenda](#), the BHS Research Team:

- Developed research questions and established data analysis plans.
- 2 surveys developed and distributed to 100+ BHS School Psychologists.
- University IRB approval received for 2 longitudinal data studies.
- 8 National conference presentations
- 5 Policy Papers in draft.



PART IV: Grants Received

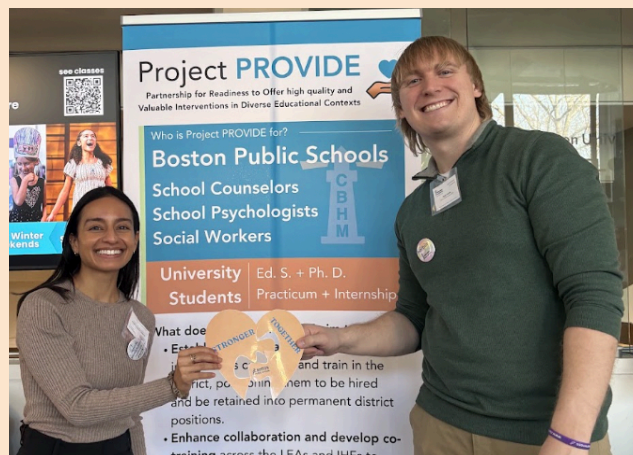
To build a world-class school psychology department capable of delivering high-quality services to students, we must secure external funding to braid with city funding and provide the resources and services our students need. During the 2025-2026 school year, the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department mobilized nearly \$1.5 million dollars in combined funding for behavioral health initiatives district-wide.

Table 1. Summary of Funds Awarded: 2025-2026

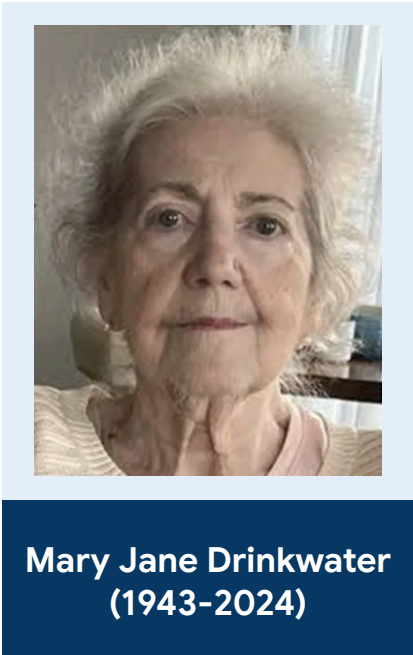
Fund Type	Funds Awarded
Total Private Funds Awarded	373,808.78
Total State-Level Funds Awarded	\$69,910.00
Total Federal Funds Awarded	~1,070,381.00
Total Combined Funding Awarded	~1.44 million

Together, these funds directly support the training, development, and retention of school mental health staff serving BPS communities and equip them with the tools to deliver high-quality services to students and families. To maximize impact, these resources were directed to six key areas:

1. District-wide access to a universal MBH screening via the BIMAS-2.
2. School mental health education and awareness events for students and families, during and outside of school hours, in multiple languages.
3. High-impact training & professional development for school mental health staff.
4. Robust university training experiences, including paid internship opportunities.
5. Enhanced central staffing capacity for ongoing program improvement.
6. Materials used in the delivery of mental health services to students



Private Funding: Mary Jane Drinkwater Memorial Fund



The **Mary Jane Drinkwater Memorial Fund: Award for Professional Development Travel** was established in 2024 in honor of Mary Jane Drinkwater (1943-2024), a former BPS elementary teacher and school psychologist. In light of her commitment to education, advocacy, and professional development, these funds provide financial assistance to school psychologists to attend and present at national conferences. This year, over \$12,000.00 was distributed to four dedicated school psychologists to attend and present at the **2026 NASP Annual Convention in Chicago, IL**. To learn more about this Fund and Mary Jane’s legacy, visit <https://cbhmboston.com/mary-jane-drinkwater-fund>.

2025-2026 Mary Jane Drinkwater Memorial Fund Recipients



Name School	<u>Fook Yee Harry Lo</u> Boston Latin	<u>Jennifer Gibney</u> Hennigan K-8	<u>Laura Shachmut</u> Brighton High	<u>Ronnie Guzman</u> City-Wide Bilingual Compliance
Professional interests:	MTSS, parent and teacher consultation, student-centered advocacy, and AI use	Trauma- informed practices, teacher consultation, and mentorship.	MTSS, consultation, mentorship, and restorative discipline practices.	Building positive school climate through culturally sensitive practices.
Presentation Title & Authors:	<i>Advancing School Psychology: Implementing AI to Support Sustainable Practice</i> (Mari, J., Gibney, J., Guzman, R., McClure, B., Lo, F. Y. H, Amador, A., Hall, C., Shachmut, L., 2026)			

Private Funding: Boston Children's Hospital CBHM Grant

Sustained investment from Boston Children's Hospital since 2010 has provided the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department the vital foundation necessary to grow, innovate, and serve the BPS community. During the 2025-2026 school year, these resources resulted in:

- Professional development and training opportunities for BHS central office administrators and school psychologists.
- Partial funding of the BIMAS-2 universal screening tool, which is now available to all BPS schools.
- Increased research and program evaluation opportunities.
- Strengthened internal capacity for data-driven MTSS implementation.
- Systematic data collection and year-end reporting.

State-Level: DESE SEL & Mental Health Continuation Grant

The DESE SEL & Mental Health Continuation Grant allowed BHS to expand mental health screening and provide additional mental health resources and activities for students and families.

May Mental Health Month Events

75+

**Mental Health
Events**

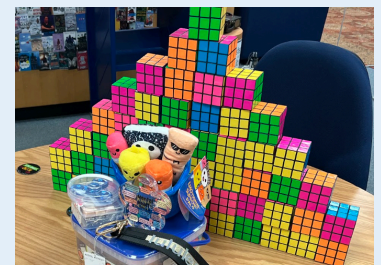
19,000+

**Students
Reached**

3,400+

**Additional
Students Screened**

Languages included: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, English



Federal Funding: Project PROVIDE DOE Grant

In 2023, BHS received a federally funded Mental Health Service Professional grant that seeks to recruit, train, and retain a mental health workforce reflective of the students we serve, ensuring they receive high-quality, evidence-based care not only to succeed academically but to flourish and thrive in all aspects of their development. Project PROVIDE aims to increase the number of linguistically diverse and highly qualified **school psychologists, social workers, and school counselors** through yearlong **mentorship, stipends** for university interns, and comprehensive **professional development** (PD).

Project PROVIDE Goals:

1. **Recruit: Establish a pathway** for students in Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to enter and train in the district, preparing them for future employment.
2. **Train: Develop co-training** across the district and IHEs to offer high-quality preparation and ongoing support for mental health providers.
3. **Retain: Strengthen connections** between BPS and community agencies to more effectively support BPS youth receiving mental health services

Project PROVIDE Year 3 Outcomes

30+ Interns Trained

Students hailing from universities across the United States completed their training at the master's, specialist, and doctoral levels to become school psychologists, school counselors, or social workers.

Staff within their first 3 years at BPS were paired with a mentor. This inter-departmental collaboration encompassed social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists.

40+ Staff Mentored

200+ PD Hours

Since 2023, Project PROVIDE has offered over 200 hours of free professional development on evidence-based practices to BPS and community mental health practitioners

BPS staff participated as field supervisors for interns, mentors, and mentees. Through Project PROVIDE, we have been able to provide stipends for staff, building upon our retention strategies

\$1 Million in Funds Received

4 New Hires

Additionally, this grant has enabled BPS to more effectively convert trainees into employees to fill vacancies and support the retention of mental health providers. This year, 4 Cohort One interns were hired by the district as School Psychologists.

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Acknowledgements

This work would not be possible without the essential contributions of...

BPS School Psychologists and BPS School Communities

BPS Internal Partners

Office of Social Work, Office of Specialized Services; Office of Data & Accountability; Office of Teaching and Learning

University Partners & Students

University of Massachusetts, Boston, Northeastern University, Boston University, Tufts University, Williams James College, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Community Mental Health Partners

Boston Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnerships (BCHNP); Boston School-Based Behavioral Health Collaborative (BSBBHC),

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Learn more about us!

- Follow us on Instagram: [@BostonSchoolPsychs](https://www.instagram.com/BostonSchoolPsychs), Facebook [@BostonSchoolPsychs](https://www.facebook.com/BostonSchoolPsychs), and Youtube: [@BostonSchoolPsychs](https://www.youtube.com/BostonSchoolPsychs)

