



Partnering Effectively with Schools: An Interdisciplinary Task

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Background

Need for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- **14 to 20 percent** of youth attend school with significant **behavioral health concerns** that negatively impact their school performance (CDC, 2001)
- Federal education reform initiatives emphasize the need to maximize behavioral health resources through **partnerships** among schools, families, & communities
 - **Psychologists** are increasingly coordinating services with school staff and programming across educational systems, but **lack training for practice in educational settings** (Paternite et al., 2006)
 - The Surgeon General identifies **educators as ‘gatekeepers’** in recognizing & addressing student mental health difficulties, though many report feeling **unprepared to do so effectively** (Rothi, Leavy, & Best, 2008)
- Interdisciplinary collaboration between behavioral health & education is fraught with challenges, including differences in language, culture, expectations, and even goals (Ball, Mellin, & Greene, 2010)
- Education and behavioral health professionals must be trained to negotiate the needs of multiple systems while delivering effective services.

Specific Aims

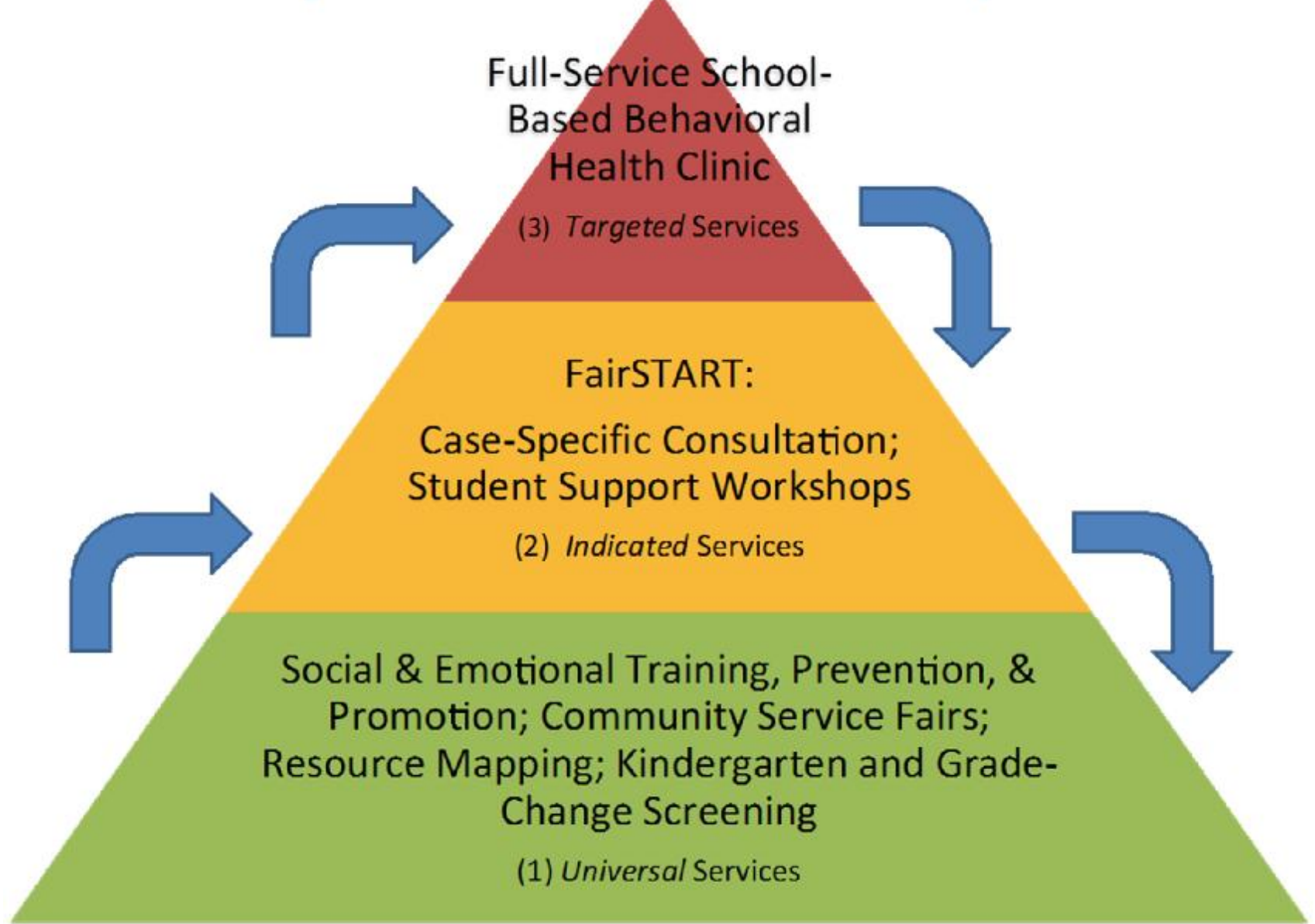
Aim 1: Provide behavioral health staff and trainees with interdisciplinary training and experience in educational systems, school consultation, and school-based services.

Aim 2: Enhance educators’ ability to address complex behavioral health difficulties through consultation and interdisciplinary training in behavioral health.

Interdisciplinary Training

Interdisciplinary Training For Psychologists

Mentored experiences within the context of a school-community behavioral health partnership



Prevention à Indicated à Targeted

- Training, weekly supervision in school partnerships, and coaching in interprofessional consultation were offered to behavioral health staff and trainees
- Change in interdisciplinary skills assessed via a cross-walk of standards for effective school-mental health service delivery (Ball et al., 2010).

Interdisciplinary Training For Educators

Educator Trainings, Workshops, & Ongoing Consultation

- **Large-group trainings:** Emotional Regulation, Crisis Response, Community Resources, and Collaborative Problem-Solving
- **Small-group workshops:** Addressing child-specific concerns (e.g., Selective Mutism; Resource Mapping)
- **Behavioral Health Consultation:** Technical assistance in addressing children’s behavioral health concerns

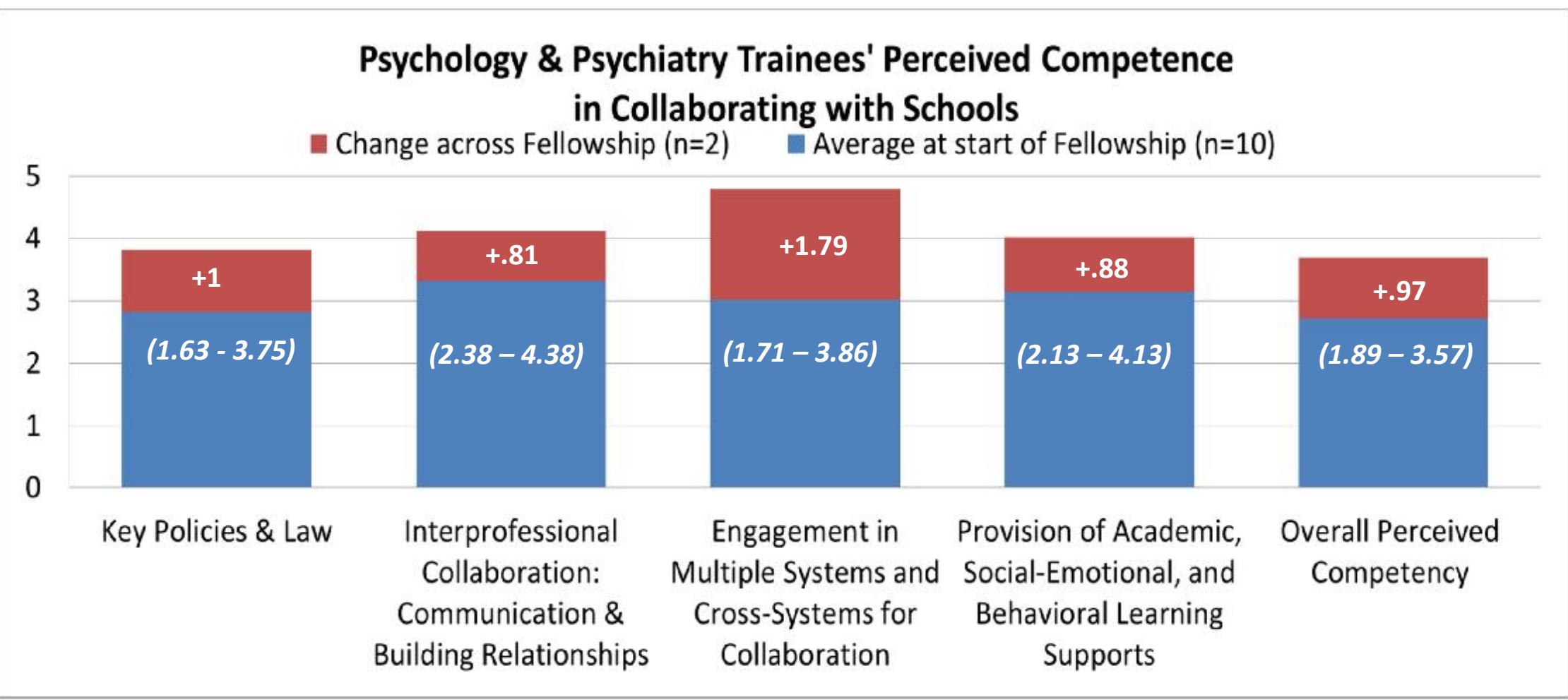
District & Student Population

- 8 School Buildings • 526 Teachers • 548 “Other” Staff
- 5,950 Students • 19% Food Assist. • 15% with IEPs

Results

Interdisciplinary Training for Psychologists

- Trainees **enter** with a **range of perceived competence** in working with schools - but become **increasingly proficient** over the course of fellowship
- **Interprofessional collaboration** most commonly involved school mental health professionals (64%), school administrators (26%), and teachers (24%)

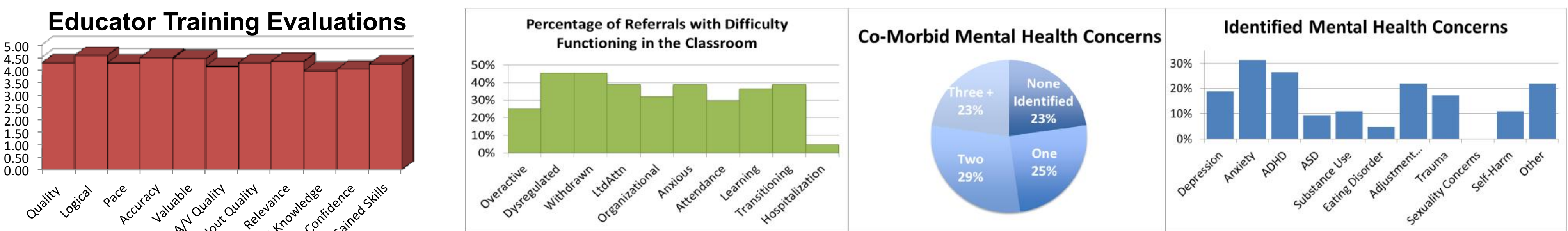


Top Areas of Perceived Weakness		
Standard		Average
1.6	Understands typical school improvement planning process, particularly those specific to the school/district	1.87
1.7	Understands the political context in the organization and its' impact on decision-making	2.37
3.5	Effectively navigates school-based services through appropriate pre-referral and referral processes	2.37
4.12	Demonstrates knowledge of the three-tiered model of universal, selected, and targeted levels of intervention, and is able to effectively work across all levels	2.37

Greatest Change Across Fellowship		
Standard		Average
1.6	Understands typical school improvement planning process, particularly those specific to the school/district	2
2.7	Demonstrates knowledge of variance in communication styles	2
3.4	Identifies and knows the protocols for accessing various school- and community-based resources available to support overall school success and promote healthy student development	2
3.5	Effectively navigates school-based services through appropriate pre-referral and referral processes	2.5

Interdisciplinary Training for Educators

- **Educators** most commonly **requested** interdisciplinary collaboration for concerns regarding classroom functioning (89%) and identified mental health concerns (82%)



Discussion & Next Steps

Conclusions

- To facilitate success for children with complex behavioral health needs, professionals from traditionally disparate behavioral health and education systems must *work together* to increase interdisciplinary competency

Limitations

- This study is a **pilot** of interprofessional training, with a limited sample size
- The field is lacking in reliable, standardized measurement tools in interprofessional competencies

Next Steps

- Identify whether collaboration between schools & community agencies increases interprofessional collaborative skills and competencies for both educators & psychologists
- Determine whether increased interprofessional competency is linked to increased ability to meet the social & emotional needs of youth & families