



# *The Status of Mental Health Resources in Massachusetts Based on Professional Ratio Recommendations*



*Research brief developed at Worcester State University, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health Integrated Resources for Children Project (BIRCh).*

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## Introduction

Student mental health needs have increased within our public schools. A variety of professionals are available to support students' mental health within the school setting including school psychologists and school counselors. To do their job effectively, the ratio of mental health professionals to students must meet professional standards. The National Association of School Psychologists [NASP] recommends a 1:500 school psychologist to student ratio (NASP, 2022) while the American School Counselors Association [ASCA] recommends a 1:250 ratio (American School Counselors Association, 2023). While conversation at the national level has often centered on statewide ratios, it is important to examine ratios within a state to examine how resources are distributed. In this research brief, ratio data is presented for school psychologists and school counselors by school district.

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## Method

### Data Sources and Data Collection

Data from the 2022-2023 school year for each public school district (excluding charter schools and virtual schools) were obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to examine mental health ratios by district. Enrollment data was obtained from 2022-2023 Enrollment by Grade (District) (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2023a).

School psychologist and school counselor ratio data were obtained from the 2022-2023 Race/ Ethnicity and Gender Staffing Report- District (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2023b).

## Data Analysis

The total student enrollment for each district was divided by the total number of school psychologists / school counselors in each district to obtain the ratio of school psychologists /school counselors to students. Ratios were then determined to either meet the standard identified by each group's professional association or were identified as being less than or equal to 1.5, 2.0, or 3.0 times the recommended ratio, or greater than 3.0 times the ratio. Districts without a school psychologist or school counselor were identified.

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## Findings

Overall findings show that the school psychologist to student ratio in the state of Massachusetts was 1:679 during the 2022-2023 school year. The school counselor to student ratio was 1:352. There was wide variation seen throughout the state as to whether individual districts were meeting or exceeding the recommended ratios set forth by both the National Association of School Psychologists and the American School Counselors Association. Only 27.5% of districts in the state are currently meeting the recommended 1:500 ratio for school psychologists, and 18.75% of districts are meeting the recommended ratio of 1:250 for school counselors.

Table 1 provides an overall summary of the number of districts that are meeting or exceeding the recommended ratio. It also provides data on the number of districts that do not have a school psychologist or school counselor on staff.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Districts by Ratio Statewide (n= 320)**

	Meets	1.5	2.0	3.0	>3.0	No FTE
School Psychologists (1:500)	88	93	54	32	21	32
School Counselors (1:250)	60	92	43	14	14	45

Figures 1-4 provide a statewide overview of where the districts are located throughout the state that are meeting or exceeding the recommended ratios of school psychologists and school counselors along with districts that do not currently have a school psychologist or school counselor on staff. Because some districts may regionalize at certain levels (e.g. multiple smaller towns regionalizing at the high school level) it was not possible to map all of the ratios on a single map. Therefore, two ratio maps were created: one showing the ratios for all districts that have schools at the elementary level and one showing the ratio for all districts that contain schools at the high school level.

Figure 1 *Elementary School Psychologists Ratios*

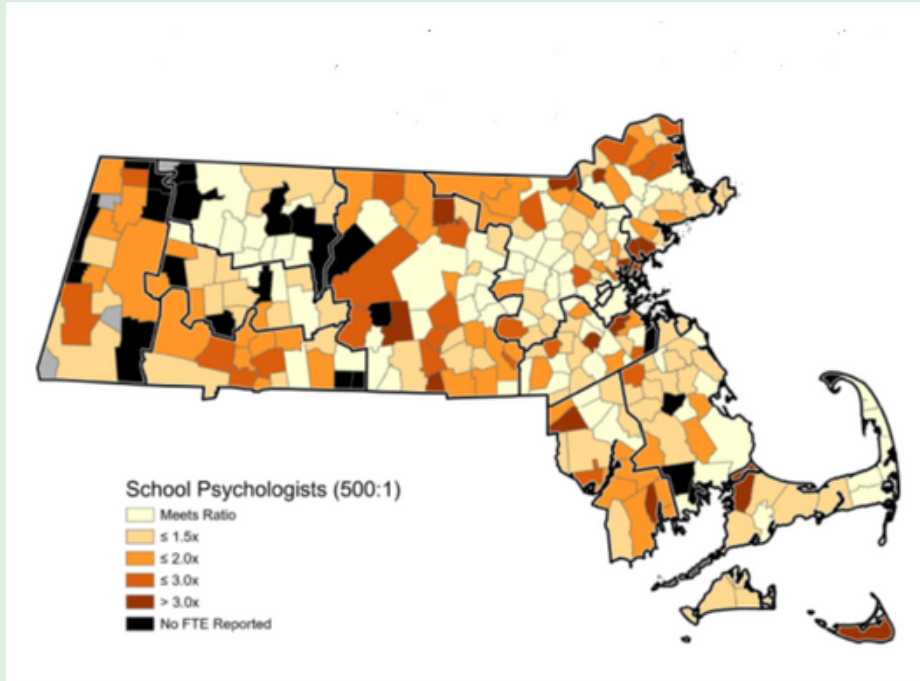
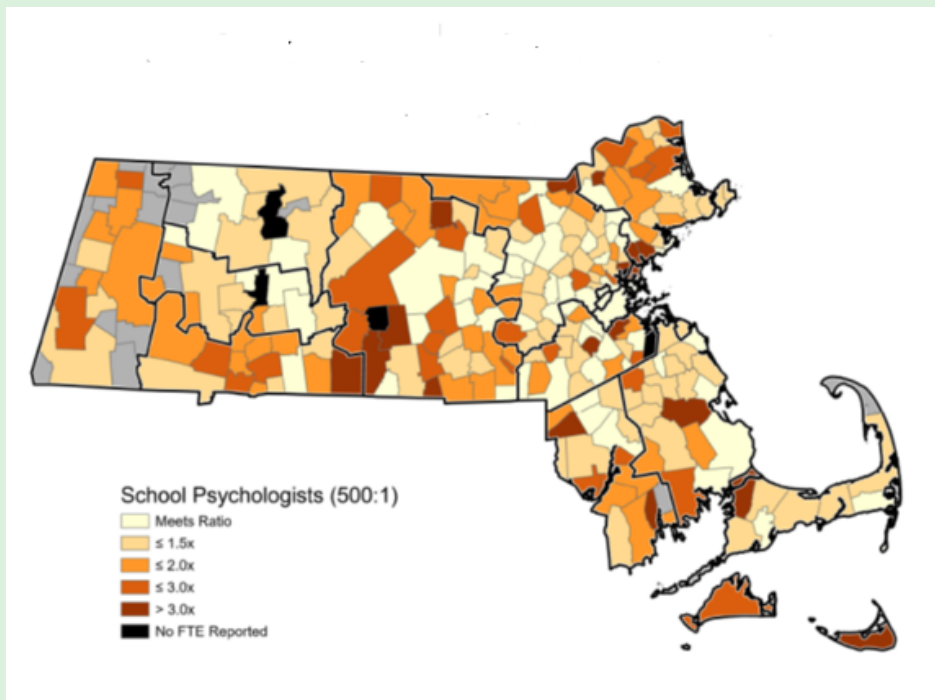
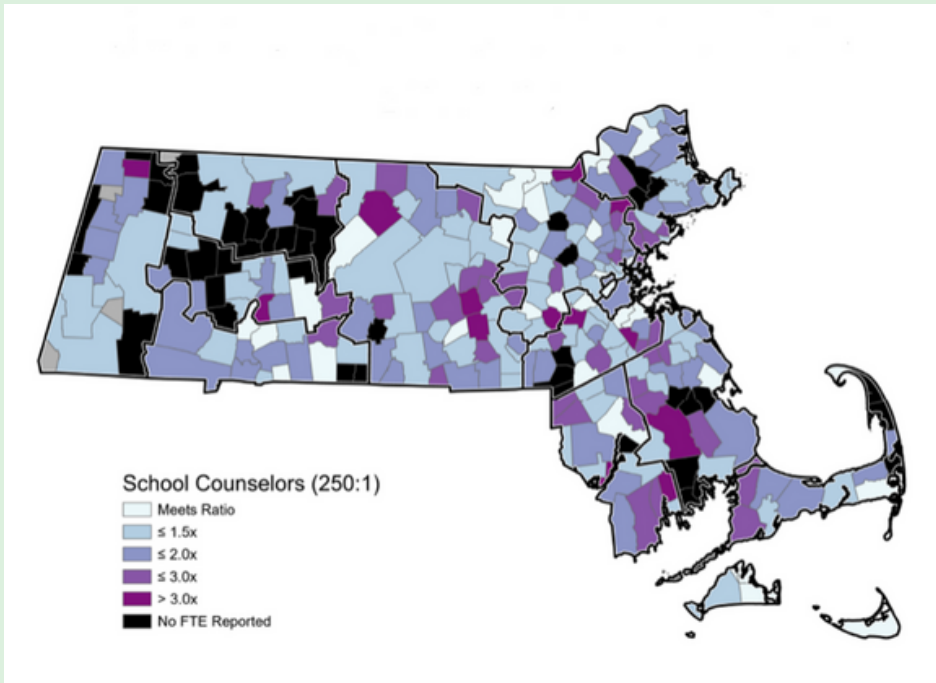


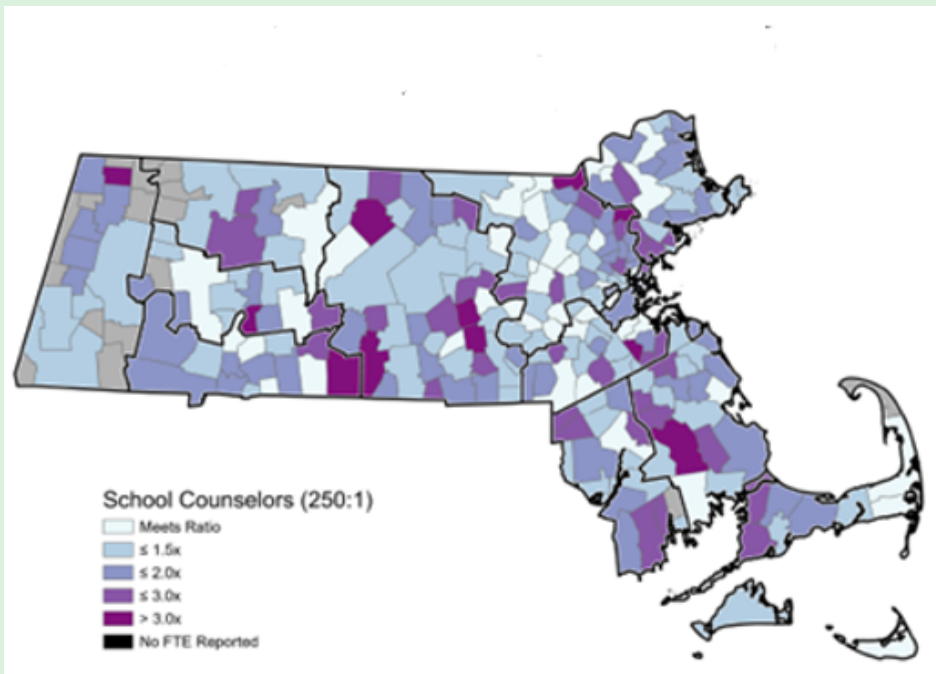
Figure 2 *High School Psychologists Ratios*



**Figure 3 Elementary School Counselor Ratios**



**Figure 3 High School Counselor Ratios**





## Conclusions and Key Points

Currently, most school districts in Massachusetts are not meeting the recommended school psychologist / school counselor ratios. Of concern is the number of districts that do not have a school psychologist / school counselor on staff and those who have ratios that far exceed the recommended staffing ratios. This creates a situation in which access to mental health resources is inequitably distributed throughout the state and students, by the nature of where they live and the district they go to school in, either have access to these necessary supports in school or do not. It will be important to find ways to increase the numbers of school counselors and school psychologists in districts who need this support the most.

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## Recommendations

**Establish Funding Opportunities for High-Ratio Districts:** Given the disparities in access to mental health resources throughout the state, state-level funding opportunities should be developed to expand the mental health resources in high-ratio districts.

**Establish “Grow Your Own” Programming:** State level funding should be allocated to high-ratio districts which will allow for graduate level training of a school psychologist/school counselor in exchange for a committed work period following graduation.

**Establish Community Connections in High-Ratio Districts:** Community partnerships are critical in high-ratio districts where students may have more limited access to school-based mental health resources. This can be challenging in communities that may be more rural and have less access to community mental health partners. Finding ways to expand community partnerships to these regions will be critical to supporting students.



## References

American School Counselor Association. (2023). School counselor roles and ratios. Retrieved from: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Ratios>.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2023a). 2022-2023 Enrollment by Grade (District). Retrieved from: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/enrollmentbygrade.aspx>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2023b). 2022-2023 Race/ Ethnicity and Gender Staffing Report- District. Retrieved from: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/teacherbyracegender.aspx>

National Association of School Psychologists. (2022). Shortages in school psychology: Policies addressing the shortage of school psychologists. <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/critical-policy-issues/shortage-of-school-psychologists>

## Appendix A Ratios by District

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Abington	534.50	534.50
Acton-Boxborough	320.81	256.65
Acushnet	963.00	1203.75
Agawam	1152.33	384.11
Amesbury	593.00	317.68
Amherst	210.00	350.00
Amherst-Pelham	410.00	256.25
Andover	476.38	449.27
Arlington	798.27	460.54
Ashburnham-Westminster	769.67	461.80
Ashland	262.82	247.09
Assabet Valley Regional Vocational Technical	564.00	188.00
Athol-Royalston	781.50	312.60
Attleboro	1519.49	658.44
Auburn	1279.00	255.80
Avon	365.00	365.00
Ayer Shirley School District	818.00	327.20
Barnstable	537.56	439.82
Bedford	668.16	264.48
Belchertown	425.00	221.35
Bellingham	446.00	401.40
Belmont	561.28	280.64
Berkley	852.00	No FTE
Berkshire Hills	1169.00	292.25
Berlin-Boylston	357.33	536.00
Beverly	915.00	481.58
Billerica	560.70	408.64
Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical	1230.00	175.71
Blackstone-Millville	489.33	293.60
Blue Hills Regional Vocational Technical	575.00	230.00
Boston	472.29	491.46
Bourne	1554.00	518.00
Boxford	366.00	No FTE
Braintree	449.58	442.08

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Brewster	431.00	431.00
Bridgewater-Raynham	548.20	685.25
Brimfield	287.00	287.00
Bristol County Agricultural	No FTE	549.00
Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	655.00
Brockton	1490.60	354.06
Brookfield	485.00	No FTE
Brookline	446.84	233.77
Burlington	461.08	179.58
Cambridge	265.08	348.79
Canton	495.23	374.30
Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	170.77
Carlisle	200.33	No FTE
Carver	762.50	508.33
Central Berkshire	768.50	313.67
Chelmsford	459.55	302.69
Chelsea	1538.25	410.20
Chesterfield-Goshen	725.00	No FTE
Chicopee	958.57	239.64
Clarksburg	No FTE	No FTE
Clinton	657.33	303.38
Cohasset	703.00	426.06
Concord	389.20	486.50
Concord-Carlisle	261.20	174.13
Conway	123.00	No FTE
Danvers	557.76	462.14
Dartmouth	886.84	518.46
Dedham	204.40	365.00
Deerfield	309.00	No FTE
Dennis-Yarmouth	571.40	317.44
Dighton-Rehoboth	619.25	427.07
Douglas	790.67	395.33
Dover	627.50	1004.00
Dover-Sherborn	575.50	191.83
Dracut	1790.50	994.72
Dudley-Charlton Reg	623.45	372.72
Duxbury	401.43	216.15

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
East Bridgewater	687.67	294.71
East Longmeadow	635.25	231.00
Eastham	310.00	465.00
Easthampton	565.20	282.60
Easton	682.00	487.14
Edgartown	673.33	134.67
Erving	129.00	No FTE
Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District	847.00	264.69
Everett	No FTE	242.83
Fairhaven	913.00	309.49
Fall River	829.13	388.36
Falmouth	581.76	706.43
Farmington River Reg	No FTE	No FTE
Fitchburg	1722.33	397.46
Florida	No FTE	No FTE
Foxborough	645.79	247.88
Framingham	610.13	363.69
Franklin	785.17	471.10
Franklin County Regional Vocational Technical	602.00	602.00
Freetown-Lakeville	925.33	365.26
Frontier	606.00	606.00
Gardner	795.67	253.94
Gateway	775.00	407.89
Georgetown	1270.00	423.33
Gill-Montague	No FTE	479.44
Gloucester	561.00	318.75
Gosnold	No FTE	No FTE
Grafton	770.00	1711.11
Granby	718.00	377.89
Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	282.40
Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical	1692.00	241.71
Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical	767.33	255.78
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical	2095.00	232.78
Greenfield	723.00	723.00

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Groton-Dunstable	783.67	213.73
Hadley	No FTE	494.00
Halifax	No FTE	No FTE
Hamilton-Wenham	551.00	280.17
Hampden-Wilbraham	476.50	461.13
Hampshire	662.00	220.67
Hancock	No FTE	No FTE
Hanover	515.80	322.38
Harvard	510.00	237.21
Hatfield	345.00	345.00
Haverhill	1295.83	409.21
Hawlemont	No FTE	No FTE
Hingham	542.43	292.08
Holbrook	1310.00	655.00
Holland	No FTE	No FTE
Holliston	694.00	280.40
Holyoke	988.60	135.80
Hoosac Valley Regional	986.00	493.00
Hopedale	1092.00	364.00
Hopkinton	1015.37	349.83
Hudson	331.86	290.38
Hull	258.33	387.50
Ipswich	421.84	276.38
King Philip	453.00	323.57
Kingston	606.50	No FTE
Lawrence	1693.03	218.08
Lee	666.00	333.00
Leicester	451.33	451.33
Lenox	770.00	385.00
Leominster	1200.00	254.24
Leverett	141.00	No FTE
Lexington	691.41	286.40
Lincoln	296.18	No FTE
Lincoln-Sudbury	674.55	185.50
Littleton	563.33	444.74
Longmeadow	926.00	365.53
Lowell	942.00	448.57

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Ludlow	757.00	252.33
Lunenburg	624.80	624.80
Lynn	1624.53	501.07
Lynnfield	439.00	731.67
Malden	2102.67	450.57
Manchester Essex Regional	610.50	407.00
Mansfield	343.10	368.92
Marblehead	374.57	174.80
Marion	No FTE	No FTE
Marlborough	794.17	595.63
Marshfield	537.57	470.38
Martha's Vineyard	1261.67	252.33
Masconomet	774.50	193.63
Mashpee	481.00	288.60
Mattapoiset	429.00	No FTE
Maynard	398.00	248.75
Medfield	502.60	273.15
Medford	595.14	520.75
Medway	638.79	363.45
Melrose	592.15	481.13
Mendon-Upton	877.08	309.56
Methuen	644.00	153.33
Middleborough	674.67	759.00
Middleton	225.31	No FTE
Milford	933.96	457.45
Millbury	539.67	231.29
Millis	1206.00	603.00
Milton	2160.50	236.12
Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical	172.75	181.84
Mohawk Trail	394.00	328.33
Monomoy Regional School District	491.39	184.27
Monson	821.00	136.83
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical	704.50	234.83
Mount Greylock	798.67	413.10
Nahant	No FTE	No FTE
Nantucket	1718.00	156.18

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Narragansett	490.33	919.38
Nashoba	462.27	254.25
Nashoba Valley Regional Vocational Technical	750.00	250.00
Natick	477.32	229.44
Nauset	654.00	130.80
Needham	986.61	207.71
New Bedford	1788.86	521.75
New Salem-Wendell	No FTE	No FTE
Newburyport	718.33	439.80
Newton	458.76	253.89
Norfolk	338.67	No FTE
Norfolk County Agricultural	580.00	193.33
North Adams	1208.00	4026.67
North Andover	794.64	529.76
North Attleborough	783.20	559.43
North Brookfield	No FTE	625.71
North Middlesex	754.25	274.27
North Reading	261.56	784.67
Northampton	536.04	367.57
Northampton-Smith Vocational Agricultural	566.00	188.67
Northboro-Southboro	866.43	178.38
Northborough	262.83	525.67
Northbridge	649.00	649.00
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational Technical	1292.00	1292.00
Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	179.00
Norton	473.20	262.89
Norwell	538.25	276.03
Norwood	1743.00	471.08
Oak Bluffs	625.71	219.00
Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	187.00
Old Rochester	1051.00	210.20
Orange	524.00	524.00
Orleans	145.00	No FTE
Oxford	1437.00	479.00



District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Palmer	567.00	567.00
Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical	1066.67	160.00
Peabody	839.29	309.21
Pelham	655.00	No FTE
Pembroke	623.75	499.00
Pentucket	891.60	208.32
Petersham	No FTE	126.00
Pioneer Valley	507.69	347.37
Pittsfield	613.63	377.62
Plainville	648.00	No FTE
Plymouth	487.60	416.32
Plympton	237.00	No FTE
Provincetown	No FTE	142.00
Quabbin	1143.16	271.50
Quaboag Regional	1181.00	393.67
Quincy	861.52	202.29
Ralph C Mahar	523.00	134.10
Randolph	512.60	854.33
Reading	305.32	582.88
Revere	1824.50	608.17
Richmond	No FTE	No FTE
Rochester	No FTE	No FTE
Rockland	386.25	540.75
Rockport	730.00	292.00
Rowe	No FTE	No FTE
Salem	662.32	618.17
Sandwich	714.00	446.25
Saugus	2462.00	615.50
Savoy	No FTE	No FTE
Scituate	394.14	383.19
Seekonk	515.50	343.67
Sharon	498.87	562.22
Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational Technical	646.00	258.40
Sherborn	501.25	802.00
Shrewsbury	491.00	755.38
Shutesbury	155.00	No FTE

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Silver Lake	1574.00	314.80
Somerset	807.50	807.50
Somerset Berkley Regional School District	1003.00	334.33
Somerville	1203.75	283.24
South Hadley	839.00	1525.45
South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical	421.00	210.50
South Shore Regional Vocational Technical	No FTE	326.50
Southampton	No FTE	No FTE
Southborough	317.50	705.56
Southbridge	452.25	402.00
Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical	1558.00	311.60
Southern Berkshire	614.00	307.00
Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District	1185.00	197.50
Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District	661.00	440.67
Spencer-E Brookfield	1721.25	275.40
Springfield	1317.83	395.35
Stoneham	760.00	380.00
Stoughton	795.11	361.41
Sturbridge	292.33	438.50
Sudbury	422.50	316.88
Sunderland	177.00	No FTE
Sutton	647.50	323.75
Swampscott	290.86	339.33
Swansea	1325.33	331.33
Tantasqua	876.00	211.08
Taunton	806.63	263.50
Tewksbury	914.57	533.50
Tisbury	544.00	136.00
Topsfield	314.00	No FTE
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical	957.00	245.38
Triton	1115.50	446.20
Truro	330.00	No FTE
Tyngsborough	348.00	240.92

District	School Psychologist Ratio	School Counselor Ratio
Up-Island Regional	686.67	294.29
Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical	769.00	256.33
Uxbridge	822.00	411.00
Wachusett	499.19	374.39
Wakefield	429.22	413.13
Wales	No FTE	No FTE
Walpole	729.80	294.27
Waltham	1446.92	434.08
Ware	562.00	562.00
Wareham	403.00	261.69
Watertown	532.40	235.58
Wayland	262.29	585.96
Webster	1692.00	676.80
Wellesley	238.97	259.88
Wellfleet	98.00	No FTE
West Boylston	864.00	254.12
West Bridgewater	561.20	501.07
West Springfield	773.60	386.80
Westborough	390.82	364.76
Westfield	1381.71	293.09
Westford	1002.13	203.02
Westhampton	520.00	No FTE
Weston	333.33	263.16
Westport	723.00	413.14
Westwood	277.88	356.79
Weymouth	No FTE	699.88
Whately	128.00	No FTE
Whitman-Hanson	505.57	442.38
Whittier Regional Vocational Technical	1277.00	319.25
Williamsburg	635.00	No FTE
Wilmington	557.20	464.33
Winchendon	1239.00	619.50
Winchester	433.30	404.95
Winthrop	1941.00	485.25
Woburn	534.50	475.11
Worcester	1197.93	506.63
Worthington	No FTE	No FTE
Wrentham	475.50	No FTE

## Citation

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*The research brief was completed by a school psychology trainer and school psychology graduate student from the school psychology program at Worcester State University in collaboration with the Behavioral health Integrated Resources for Children Project (BIRCh Project). The mission of the BIRCh Project is to provide professional development and resources from schools and strength the coordination of behavioral health supports provided by school and community agencies.*

