



DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

INNOVATION SUMMARY: *Editorial Help Desk*

Development and maintenance of a resource for school and central services support staff involved in generating correspondence and other documents with various MCPS stakeholders.

PROBLEM: With 211 schools and many central services departments, the number of MCPS employees who write correspondence, evaluations, and other documents lies in the hundreds; and the breadth of that work is formidable. Grammar and writing-style standards were inconsistent, which adversely affected the perception of MCPS as a credible organization of educators.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The best solution to serve this universal need is to develop and execute a strategic plan to do the following:

- Develop event and training opportunities to share information on grammar and style best practices with groups of employees.
- Make available the reference tools that employees need to do their jobs better.
- Provide a system to address individual inquiries on grammar and word usage and editorial issues.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES: The main challenge is how to have a significant effect on hundreds of employees; also, how best (with a team of 1.5 FTE) to let employees know that helpful resources are available to them.

APPLIED INNOVATION: The following innovative tools are being applied to affect a large audience of users:

1. We have developed an authority website with branded resources, including the following:
 - Tip of the Month and special topic forum
 - Interactive versions of the *MCPS Correspondence Manual*, the *MCPS Editorial Stylebook*, and *MCPS Acronyms*
 - Helpful links for writers
 - Answers to frequently asked questions Resources like Tip of the Month help users remember the source and return to it regularly for more information.
2. We host a biennial event to bring the community of users together to share and learn from speakers, invited to share their expertise and encourage the participants.
3. We update and provide the *MCPS Correspondence Manual*, *MCPS Acronyms*, and the *Editorial Stylebook* for staff development classes, and individual use.

RESULTS: In FY 2003, when the Editorial Help Desk started, we responded to 49 phone and email inquiries for the fiscal year. The website has more than 8,000 visits in FY 2024.