



Standard Program and Service Evaluation Template

(Board of Education Approved on June 1, 2004)

Program Evaluation Question(s) (Revised 10/19/2004)

- 1. What post-high school options are pursued by graduates who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing who received Special School District services?**
- 2. What services were most and least beneficial to them as they pursued post-high school options?**

I. Program/Service Information

Name of Program or Services: Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Personnel Responsible for Evaluation: Ken Alexander, Area Coordinator

Date of Evaluation: January 2005 through June 2005

Goal/Objective of Program/Services: To provide a Free, Appropriate Public Education which includes special education and related services specially designed to meet the unique needs of students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing by:

1. Development of language in the areas of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics necessary to achieve literacy and effective communication, which is the foundation for academic progress in the general education curriculum
2. Development of auditory and speech skills
3. Assessment of hearing and appropriateness of amplification; and, for those children with Cochlear Implants, consultation from the Cochlear Implant Support Team
4. Development of social skills and self-advocacy skills
5. Assessment of visual communication needs to determine visual accommodations necessary (Educational Interpreter or Real-Time Writer) to access educational environment and/or extra-curricular activities.

Brief description of relationship between program goals, CSIP and MSIP Standards: The CSIP plan for the Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing is to improve student achievement in the area of reading/literacy and develop individual professional development plans for staff, to maintain a high level of excellence. Both of these initiatives support the stated program goal. The relationship to MSIP is seen in Standard 6.5, Focus on Academic Achievement, Standard 6.7, Professional Development, and Standard 8.7, Participation of Patrons, Parents and Students.



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Demographic Description of Program:

Location(s)

A. Self-Contained/Resource Sites (Total of 18 classroom/resource sites)

Early Childhood Auditory/Oral and Total Communication Site

Ladue Early Childhood Center

Elementary Total Communication Sites

Bellerive Elementary/Parkway

Lawson Elementary/Hazelwood

Elementary Oral Sites

Captain/Clayton

Mark Twain/Brentwood

Willow Brook/Pattonville

Middle School Total Communication Sites

Hoech/Ritenour

Brentwood Middle/Brentwood

Secondary Sites

Ritenour High School/Ritenour

Brentwood High School/Brentwood

B. Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf services – All St. Louis County schools

Number of staff:

- 1 Assistant Area Coordinator
- 21 Classroom Teachers
- 17 Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf
- 14 Paraeducators
- 65 Educational Interpreters
- 2 Real-Time Writers
- 1 School Psychologist
- 1 Cochlear Implant Audiologist
- 1 Counselor of the Deaf
- 1 Social Worker of the Deaf
- 2 Facilitators

Participants: All St. Louis County resident students ages 3-21, once IDEA qualified, and, who have an educational diagnosis of Hearing Impaired or Deaf, are eligible to receive services based on student need as determined through the IEP process.

Length of program/service: Ages 3-21, as prescribed in IEPs. Services are implemented during regular school calendar and ESY programs.



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II. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation (check stakeholders utilized):

Parent: Gretchen Logue, Kirkwood Resident
 SSD staff: Chris Montgomery, Director, Region 3 and Sandy Anzalone, Asst. AC
 Partner district staff: Debbie Blount, Principal, Bellerive Elem. School/Parkway
 University staff: Bill Clark, Dir. Program for Audiology and Communication
 Science, Professor of Otolaryngology, Washington University
 Other: Chair, Ken Alexander, AC-Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

III. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered (check type utilized)

√ Student data – Post-High School options pursued
 √ Student data – Program services most and least beneficial as they pursued post-high school options

IV. Data Collection Methodology (examples)

√ Post-High School Options Pursued Survey
 √ Student Survey (Person-to-Person follow-up interviews regarding Program/Services)

V. Results

Time Spent by Personnel Conducting and Completing Evaluation:

Committee Chair	94 hours
Committee Members	<u>37 hours</u>
Total Time	131 hours

Post-High School Options Pursued Survey:

Data collected from graduating students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing was utilized to create the June 2004 and June 2005 pie charts (Appendix A and B). Of the ten (10) students graduating in June 2004, 40% (4) attended college, 30% (3) attended a Technical School or College and 30% (3) were identified as unknown. Of the twenty-two (22) students graduating in June 2005, 86% (19) plan to attend college, and 14% (3) plan to work. This data was collected between May 2004 and June 2005.



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The combined data shows that in 2004 and 2005 the majority of students 72% (23/32) who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing who have graduated, or reached age 21, enrolled in college. It is clear that the kind of academic success necessary for a student who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing to enter college is heavily dependent on literacy/English language skills involved in reading. This is also a factor in postsecondary vocational success (Kolvitz, 1996). A concerted focus on reading achievement is needed for adults who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (Bodner-Johnson & Sass-Lehrer, 2003). We need to engage educators and parents in learning more about how individual children with varying social and cultural backgrounds, physical attributes and learning styles progress through preschool to elementary grades and beyond. Educators want in-depth knowledge about the acquisition of English literacy by diverse children who are Deaf, because they believe this knowledge will assist them in individualizing instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Relatedly, children's experiences outside of the classroom, especially at home, are critical (Bowe, 2000; Sass-Lehrer & Bodner-Johnson, 2003). Home environments that support English literacy acquisition of diverse learners who are Deaf are needed. This will be addressed in the form of a recommendation due to the ongoing effort needed in this area.

Introduction

In developing the student survey regarding program/services (Person-to-Person Interviews), there were two considerations: 1. research indicates that students who are Deaf are as capable as students who are non-disabled intellectually and can handle the cognitive demands of a work situation with relative ease, and 2. the major obstacle on the job has been related to difficulty in communication which has restricted job mobility and advancement (Power & Leigh, 2005).

Rationale

A review of the literature shows that the success of postsecondary programs or "employability skills" (those skills needed to acquire and retain a job) is impacted by the education individuals who are Deaf receive in the early intervention, elementary, and secondary years (Lam, 1994). Historically, employability skills were thought to be mainly vocational or job-specific; they were not thought to include academic skills commonly taught in schools (Booth & Rowsell, 2002). It is increasingly now recognized that employability skills include underlying academic skills, as well as attitudes and habits. This includes skills related to communication, personal and interpersonal (social) skills, and problem solving.



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In this sense, employability skills are vital because they apply to many jobs and fit the needs of many occupations (Power & Leigh, 2005). The primary goal (Goal #1) of this survey is to determine students' perceptions of success in:

- Academic curriculum which emphasizes literacy across the grades
- Programs which foster social-emotional development and self-advocacy skills
- Partnership between parents and teachers
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Sense of cultural identity

A secondary goal (Goal #2) of this survey was to provide a vehicle for exiting students to provide feedback to us with regard to the services they found most and least beneficial.

Student Survey Regarding Program/Services (Person-To-Person Interviews):

Demographic data were reviewed in hopes of determining findings for school-wide improvement. Examination included: regional impact, number of years served by SSD, < or > 50% day in general education, attendance and home school vs. countywide site. This demographic information provided no discernable patterns to help establish the future direction of the program or describe the trends of the past. No predictions could be made based on the Regional compilation of data, or the location where services were provided. This may be a statistical difficulty faced with low incidence populations; that it is difficult to draw conclusions on comparatively small numbers.

This report presents results of post-high school options surveys, and person-to-person, follow-up interview surveys of former students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing who graduated or reached age 21 in June 2004 and June 2005. Post-high school options pursued are represented in two pie charts (Appendix A and B); student follow-up interviews regarding program/services were comprised of 18 questions evaluating students' perceptions of success (primary goal of the survey), two open-ended questions were utilized for students to provide informal feedback with regard to the services they found most and least beneficial (secondary goal of the survey). Since these were students who had exited SSD, there was no negative outcome in terms of responses. The informal feedback is analogous to a course evaluation, in that it provides feedback without negative or positive consequences to the respondent.



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Strengths of Program:

Student Responses

Interviews: **STRENGTHS** (mean ≥ 4.5)

N = 25

(1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

Goal #1: Student perception of success	Mean
➤ Request Auditory Accommodations (Question 7)	4.6
➤ Sense of Cultural Identity (Question 10)	4.5
➤ Support from Teacher of the Deaf (Questions 11)	4.6
(Question 11.1)	4.5
(Question 11.2)	4.6
(Question 11.4)	4.6
➤ Partnership Between Parents and Teachers (Question 12)	4.5
	Yes
➤ Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities (Question 13)	88%
➤ Communication Rich Environment (Question 14)	84%

(See Appendix C for Student Survey Questions)



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Overview:

Twenty-five out of thirty-two (25/32) student surveys were completed by interviewers during June 2005. The students interviewed included those who graduated or reached age 21 in 2004 and 2005. A high rate of survey completion was achieved by persistence on the part of interviewers, person-to-person contact, and willingness on the part of the interviewers to meet with respondents at times, days, and locations convenient for them. With a 78% rate of completion, the results reveal on the whole positive responses to survey questions ranging on average from a low of 4.3 to a high of 4.6. On a five point rating scale (1 means strongly disagree; 5 means strongly agree), the average of all student responses resulted in an average of 4.5. The most favorably rated items (#7, 10, 11, 11.1, 11.2, 11.4, and 12): self-advocacy (item 7), cultural identity (item 10), and support from Teacher of the Deaf (11, 11.1, 11.2, and 11.4), as well as the partnership between parents and teachers (item #12).

Discussion:

Analysis indicates that the Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing has successfully met the program goals of developing self-advocacy in the area of requesting auditory accommodations, cultural identity, and provision of appropriate support from the Teachers of the Deaf. The respondents also feel empowered in that they are enabled to become competent and capable, rather than always depending on professionals to intervene when requesting auditory accommodations.

In addition to feeling empowered, the majority of respondents also had developed a clear sense of cultural identity (item 10; mean 4.5). The main difference between Deaf and Hearing cultures is traceable to their communication – related sensory orientations (Erting, Thumann-Prezioso, & Benedict, 2000). This distinction is the basis for the difference between these two cultures (Padden & Humphries, 2005; Valli & Lucas, 2002):

	Deaf	Hearing
Language	Seen/Signed	Heard/Spoken
Humor	Understood in a <u>visual</u> context	Understood in an <u>auditory</u> context
Sociocultural Recreational Activities	Visual aspects more relevant and meaningful	Auditory aspects more relevant and meaningful



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Deaf culture becomes more tangible when more people who are Deaf appreciate their common experiences with people who are Hearing (Chamberlain, Morford & Mayberry, 2000). Language is the primary expression of culture.

One of the goals of our program is the development of mutual respect between people who are Deaf or Hearing through a deeper understanding of their differences and similarities, and an understanding that, as adults, they may move between both cultures. Student responses (item 10, mean 4.5) indicate we have been successful in reaching this goal. The world in which we live today is a very diverse one; we have come to recognize the strength of diversity. Our identity is reflected in the language we use, our beliefs, and values. It is imperative that students have choices (Chamberlain, Morford, & Mayberry, 2000). People who are Deaf can become part of Hearing or Deaf Culture, or both. This is a decision of individual choice. Data indicate that respondents felt positively about their social interactions with Deaf and Hearing Cultures (item 10, 4.5). There were four extreme responses: two respondents who felt that there were additional benefits to more socialization with non-disabled peers and two respondents who wished they had more socialization with similarly disabled peers. These inconsistent findings were noted in the comments during the face-to-face student interviews, such as:

“ . . . a desire for more socialization with Hearing peers.”

“ . . . desire to be more exposed to ASL and Deaf culture.”

The above responses, in fact, represent two ends of the cultural perspective in the field of Education of the Deaf. These extremes are similar in that they have the same goal, but opposite sides of the proverbial fence. As with cognitive dissonance theory, the program did not meet their perceived needs, but did not do it in the same fashion. SSD has been successful in providing these options to the students we serve.

And, finally, the respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the services they received from their Teachers of the Deaf (items 11, 11.1, 11.2, and 11.4, with respective means of 4.6, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.6). The overwhelming evidence indicates that the Teacher of the Deaf is critical in providing the language support needed to optimize learning across the curriculum (Luckner & Carter, 2001). These students felt engaged and that expectations were high. All three of these areas interact synergistically to create a positive outcome for the students served by the Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.



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Extracurricular Activities and Education in a Communication-Rich Environment (items #13 and 14):

To assess the extent to which students were socially integrated in the general education, a question related to social involvement and extracurricular participation (item #13) revealed that 88% (22/25) participated in extra curricular activities. Demographic data shows that 88% (22/25) were in general education classes more than 50% of their school day. Three out of twenty-five respondents who indicated that they did not participate in extra curricular activities, were in more segregated settings (>50% of day in general education). Even though Special Education research has not provided sufficient empirical data to support the notion that integrated environments have a positive impact on the socialization of students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, the data from this survey indicates that 88% (22/25) who were involved in extra curricular activities in integrated settings, and 84% (21/25) indicating that they were educated in a communication-rich environment, relate social benefit to being integrated with non-disabled peers.

The data summarized noting high ratings regarding cultural identity (item 10, mean 4.5) as well as participation in extracurricular activities (item 13, 88%) supports that relative social competence was noted for the majority of respondents (item 10, mean 4.5). This is a first step in understanding the characteristics of social environments that may contribute to a student's growth in social and cognitive domains. The Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing has actively pursued the notion, over the past four years, that social integration is not achieved by merely placing students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing with non-disabled students, but specifically programming to promote social integration. A comment which supports this includes: "... I am prepared for anything." Research indicates that there are significant benefits in the area of language and social development (Parasnis, 1998). Positive outcomes for all students in inclusive settings may foster positive sense-of-self and growth in social understanding. This may be an area for continued study.

Qualitative Responses:

Being a field with, at times, vast pedagogical differences, some collected comments reflected extremes:

From: "Teacher of the Deaf was not so helpful."

To: "My ITD [Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf] was very helpful!"

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From: "Need for more speech therapy."
To: "More exposure to pure American Sign Language [for the purpose of enculturation into the Deaf Community]."

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Some students reported the following as beneficial:

"Real-Time Captioning. Captioned films SSD Resource Bag of Sound [personal FM system]."

An example of miscellaneous comments about what was least beneficial:

"Speech Therapy in middle school."

Some of the qualitative responses reflect the fact that Auditory/Oral Programming and Total Communication Programming are not antithetical; that, indeed, for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing served by St. Louis County are provided a multitude of program options.

Of note, negative comments were shared about postsecondary services of MERS-Goodwill and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.

Overall Results:

- Ninety-six percent (24/25) of respondents were favorable in their responses to most categories of the survey; one respondent was unfavorable in most areas assessed. Overall, a conclusion of this survey is that respondents' self-perceptions, on the whole, are well integrated, satisfied, and positive. Thirty-two surveys were attempted. Seven students were unreachable (phone numbers had changed or there was no response to messages left).



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Areas Noted As Progressing Regarding Program/Service:

Student Responses	
Interviews: Areas Noted As Progressing (mean ≥ 4.3)	
N = 25	
(1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)	
Goal #1 Student Perception of Success	Mean
➤ Self-Advocacy/Social Emotional Skills	
(Question 1)	4.3
(Question 2)	4.4
(Question 3)	4.4
(Question 4)	4.4
(Question 5)	4.4
(Question 6)	4.4
➤ Read and Comprehend Effectively	4.3
(Question 8)	
➤ Ability to Communicate Effectively	4.4
(Question 9)	
➤ Teachers Sensitive to Needs and Problems	4.4
(Question 11.3)	

In fact, SSD’s Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing is viewed in a very positive light based on the data collected as part of this program evaluation. The bar is set high in St. Louis because of the fact that there are three private internationally renowned Auditory/Oral schools for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. The overall high ratings of the survey are a testament to the Public School education St Louis County provides for the students they service who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Comparatively, the lowest mean response was $\geq 4.3 - 4.4$ for items #1-6, 8, 9, and 11.3. These items quantified the areas of self-advocacy (items #1-6), reading/literacy skills (#8), ability to communicate effectively (item #9), and teacher sensitivity to needs and problems (item 11.3). There were no areas of concern.



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Discussion:

In terms of self-advocacy, an average mean of 4.4 was noted for items 1-6, though noted as a comparative weakness, is still a high score. The goal for self-advocacy is that student will be empowered to stand on their own and be able to know what, when, and how to get the visual or auditory accommodations they need.

There is a critical ongoing need for literacy/English language skill development for the students we serve; as well as an individual data collection system throughout programming from pre-school through graduation or age 21.

The ability to effectively communicate is a lifelong objective for individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and, is clearly a critical aspect of employability.

With regard to Teachers of the Deaf being sensitive to the needs and problems of students served: This is a relative weakness. It is clear that each learner's knowledge base, learning styles, intelligences, and attitude contribute to their successes; the teacher needs to create an environment that builds on their interests, creates excitement, encourages, and inspires learners (Garmston & Wellman, 1999).

The relative weaknesses (those items with responses mean $\geq 4.3 > 4.5$) from this survey are addressed below in the form of recommendations supported by Action Plans. Obviously, there is interrelatedness between Plans, that is the nature of a comprehensive program with a common purpose.

Recommendations regarding program/service:

Action Plans 1, 2, 3, and 4 are direct outcomes of this program evaluation and were developed to address areas noted as progressing.

1. Self-Advocacy/Social-Emotional Skills

Advancement of self-advocacy skills and related social-emotional skills needed for students to identify and request visual and/or auditory accessibility.

2. Read and Comprehend Effectively

Evaluate and document reading achievement data and provide honest, reliable feedback to students and parents. Create a data collection system



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of tracking reading achievement pre-school through graduation/reaching age 21.

3. Ability to Communicate Effectively

An interdependent relationship exists between reading achievement and communicative competence.

4. Teachers Sensitive to Needs and problems

Refinement of high-quality professional development as the capstone to the overall quality (“Best Practices”) of services we provide to students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and our Educational Shareholders (Students, Parents, and Partner Districts). Increasing teacher sensitivity to the fact that this is both a medical disability and a cultural identity that is multi-dimensional.

In addition, as a result of Program Evaluation Committee discussions, some related issues were considered, as well as current needs of constituents, which are addressed in the form of additional recommendations (Action Plans 5A, 5B, 5C, 6, and 7).

5. Collect annually, for five years, postsecondary benchmark and tracking survey about the number of students who graduated from college or technical school and those who are able to maintain employment – to determine if student feedback changes over the course of time. This will aid us in verifying how effective our programming and services have been to those who graduated and to provide repair strategies to those who need it for success beyond their school years. The results may provide positive outcomes, as these students become citizens and taxpayers in our community. Two related areas were raised during program evaluation committee meetings: 1. Improve Transition Plans, and 2. Develop positive linkages for students with Vocational Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Organizations.
6. Modify the perception of stakeholders that students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and are college bound are treated in a better manner than those students who are multi-disabled and Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Alter the perceptions of stakeholders through the provision of parent training, support, and ongoing dialogue.



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7. One outgrowth of the Program Evaluation Committee Meeting is a collaborative relationship between SSD's Countywide Program for Students Who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Washington University's Graduate Program in Audiology; they are willing to assist us in low-cost, acoustical adaptations to educational environments. Students with Cochlear Implants or who rely on the auditory signal for speech perception are especially affected by the presence of noise in the environment. Background noise interferes with the speech signal making it more difficult to decode the spoken message. It can be exhausting for a student to try to understand speech in a noisy environment.

VI. Action Plan for Recommendations as A Result of Program Evaluation

Persons responsible to champion action plan:

- Ken Alexander, Area Coordinator-Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Sandy Anzalone, Assistant Area Coordinator, Countywide Program for Students Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education:

See Action Plans

Date: _____
Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation