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Overview of Program Monitoring

Program monitoring is the systematic and continual observation and recording of key program aspects (Malone et al., 2014). The data gathered through program monitoring is used to appraise whether a program is on track to meet its expected outcomes. Frequent, intermittent assessment of program implementation and outcomes provides leaders and program administrators with timely information and performance feedback that can guide programmatic decisions. For many SSD programs, including those for which evaluation is required by MSIP-5, monitoring of activities, action plans, and key outcomes represents an efficient and actionable approach that is preferable to less frequent, more in-depth evaluation. Effective program monitoring is contingent upon a well-developed program plan that clearly defines program mission, resources and activities, goals and objectives, and expected outcomes. As one component of program monitoring, it is recommended that some form of voice of customer (VOC) feedback be solicited at minimum annually. When monitoring indicates that a program is consistently failing to meet expectations, an in-depth evaluation or some other corrective action may be recommended.

High quality program monitoring requires the identification and specification of outcomes, indicators, measures, benchmarks, baseline, and targets. The following definitions of these components are adapted from Malone, Mark, & Narayan (2014).

Outcome: An expected result in an individual's behavior, knowledge, or skills, or the change in practices or policies attained as a result of participation in an activity or program. In other words, what is expected to happen as a result of a program.

Indicator: An observable and measurable behavior or finding used to understand information about complex systems. Indicators are used to show whether progress is being made and the extent to which outcomes are being achieved.

Measure: An instrument, device, or method that provides information, often quantifiable data, on an outcome/indicator. A measure, or metric, provides data that allows for judgments regarding the progress and goal achievement.

Benchmark: A standard against which a program's results and progress can be compared. Often performance by similar groups, programs, or organizations can serve as a benchmark.

Baseline: The level of performance indicated by a measure prior to the implementation of a program or intervention. Baseline is used as one reference point for measuring future progress.

Target: A desired value or level of a measure at a specified time in the future. The target is a measurable result being sought. Actual progress is measured against the target to determine achievement of program outcomes.

These abbreviated reports review performance data from the previous fiscal year (as well as the current fiscal year, if available/applicable) for programs designated by DESE and/or the District as requiring at minimum a biennial evaluation. Monitoring results for all programs will be provided to the Board of Education across several separate reports submitted throughout the year.

Early Childhood Special Education

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Summary and Recommendations

- Parent survey results indicate that parents largely understand the services being provided to their child, are aware of their child's progress, and have been afforded adequate opportunities to provide input during meetings.
- 91% of students demonstrated growth on the new ECSE Literacy common assessment. Nearly 90% demonstrated growth on the new common assessment for Social Emotional Development.
- The proportion of students who were enrolled in ECSE throughout the year and whose services were deemed to become "more inclusive" across the year declined slightly in 2017-18 to 21.7%. In contrast, the proportion of non-disabled students included in the program (an alternate indicator of inclusiveness) has improved each of the last three years and was 12.9% in 2018.
- Parent perceptions of ECSE services as measured through the District IEP Survey were positive. The average parent rating of their child's services on a 0 to 10 scale of favorability was an 8.9 in 2017-18; 84% of parents rated ECSE services as 8 or higher on the 10-point scale. ECSE results exceed those for parents of students in other grades on the same survey item.
- The majority of action plans developed in the previous evaluation cycle have been completed.
- New ECSE data collection systems were implemented in 2017-18. In some cases deployment was less than 100%. These systems will be refined and used more comprehensively in 2018-19.
- The measurement plan will be modified to include evaluation of the average magnitude of student growth on the common assessment.

New Action Plans Required as a Result of Evaluation Findings: (previously-developed action plans will remain in effect unless identified as complete)

1. Continue to refine procedures for the common assessment to ensure optimal deployment. (Objective 1.1)

Anticipated date of completion: May 2020 (full completion dependent upon Sharepoint upgrade timeline)

Brief Program Description

The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program for Special School District (SSD) provides quality early intervention services to children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs utilizing researched-based best practices. In addition, we partner with parents, community and partner districts to provide the support needed to ensure students are successful in all environments. Our goal is to prepare all our students to be successful kindergarten students in the least restrictive environment possible. ECSE provides early learning experiences focusing on preparation for a successful transition into kindergarten through comprehensive programming designed to address skill building in areas of developmental delay. Educational programs exist in partner district Early Childhood Centers, community day cares, and YWCA Head Start Centers. Children are referred to the program from the Missouri First Steps Program, Parents as Teachers, Head Start Centers, local preschools, daycares, and parents.

The key, broad goals of this program include:

1. Develop and enhance quality research-based and developmentally-appropriate educational programs designed to support preschool students with IEPs, allowing them to enter kindergarten programming with the skills needed to be successful kindergarten students.
2. Students will receive inclusive services. Work with ECSE partner districts to increase inclusive opportunities for all students.
3. Promote, facilitate and enhance parent/family, student, and community collaboration to meet the needs of all students.

Please consult the ECSE Program Plan for a detailed description of this program and its intended outcomes. Program Plans are available through the SSD Department of Evaluation and Research.

A biennial report of the progress and status of the ECSE program is required under Board Policy IM. The most recent full/comprehensive evaluation of this program was approved by the Board on April 26, 2016.

Action Plans From Most Recent Evaluation/Monitoring Report(s)

Action Plan 1 (expected completion date March 2017): Conduct the scheduled survey with SSD Staff at the end of the 2015-16 school year that focuses on ECSE staff satisfaction with the support and communication provided by Area Coordinators. This survey is completed annually and is used by Area Coordinators to create a personal goal related to staff communication and satisfaction.

Status of Action Plan: Ongoing/recurring. Survey data was collected again in spring of 2018.

Action Plan 2 (expected completion date August 2016): Further study the concern and develop a plan for improving communication between Area Coordinators and paraprofessionals.

Status of Action Plan: Complete. All ECSE ACs worked with their paraprofessionals to determine what type of communication would meet their needs. Responses included developing a para professional PLC, holding para only staff meetings, conducting professional development modules for paraprofessionals based on their unique PD needs.

Action Plan 3 (expected completion date May 2018): Analyze data and complete a PDSA cycle on the new ECSE Common Assessment.

Status of Action Plan: Complete. The system was released September 2017. Three data collection rounds were completed over the course of the 2017-18 school year. Information from the common assessment can now be shared with school-age staff to facilitate transition IEP planning. A PDSA cycle was completed and several improvements will occur in 2018-19 including changes to the data collection window and procedures for students who enter the program late in the school year and will transition to kindergarten the subsequent fall. Identified electronic data entry form improvements will be implemented in 2019-20 or later dependent upon the timing of the District transition to a new Sharepoint platform. Another improvement cycle will be completed summer 2019.

Action Plan 4 (expected completion date May 2018): Continue efforts to improve communication with parents that are currently in progress.

Status of Action Plan: Complete/ongoing. ACs have worked with staff on creative ways to share information with parents including bulletin boards, newsletters, phone calls, conferences and open house opportunities. Staff received presentations on effective parent and family engagement. Information regarding staff communication with parents/families was collected via the ECSE surveys and was analyzed over summer of 2018 (see "Voice of Customer Assessment" section below).

Action Plan 5 (expected completion date January 2018): Further study and develop a plan to address areas of concern identified through the partner district surveys.

Status of Action Plan: Delayed. A meeting was held focusing on partner district collaboration. Two focus areas were identified: Staffing and professional development. An action plan was created in the area of professional development. Professional development units on the referral/evaluation process and on the IEP process have been completed and are being reviewed prior to dissemination to all partner districts. Preliminary feedback is that the professional development units meet our partner districts' needs. An action plan for staffing will be created in fall of 2018. Note that the status of this plan is listed as "delayed" due to cancellation of a scheduled spring meeting due to poor attendance.

Action Plan 6 (expected completion date May 2019): Collect and analyze data regarding the department's ability to increase our rate of inclusion for all students in all districts.

Status of Action Plan: On schedule. 2016-17 saw inclusive opportunities in 13 of our 14 districts in addition to a collaborative partnership with YWCA Head Start Programs. The 2017-18 school year will see inclusive opportunities in all 14 districts and Head Start. In addition, we have collected data to evaluate the inclusiveness of our practices. 2016-17 was our baseline year utilizing our electronic data collection system. A second year of inclusion data was collected in 2017-18. Results are presented in this report.

Action Plan 7 (expected completion date June 2018): Review and improve procedures for ECSE voice of customer survey administration and deployment.

Status of Action Plan: Complete. Stakeholder surveys have been reviewed and revised and distributed to partner district administration, SSD administration, partner district staff, SSD staff, and parents.

Action Plan 8 (expected completion date June 2020): Explore methods to assess (possibly via surveys of school-age administration and staff) success of kindergarten transition and other post-EC outcomes for students who receive SSD ECSE services.

Status of Action Plan: On schedule. The ECSE Administrative team is working with the Evaluation and Research department to explore the viability of assessing kindergarten transition outcomes via data available through SSD and partner district student information systems and/or surveys of SSD and partner district staff.

Descriptive Program Data:

959 students were enrolled in SSD Early Childhood Special Education at the time of the December 1st count in 2017. 1413 students were provided services *in total* through SSD ECSE over the course of the 2017-18 school year.

ECSE employed 10 administrators, 217 teacher-level staff (these include teachers, speech language therapists, and student services staff; a portion of staff are part-time), 136 paraprofessionals, and 5 secretaries in 2017-18.

Total Program Cost and Cost Effectiveness:

Total costs for the 2016-2017 school year¹ were \$26,179,317.39, which equates to an average cost per student served of \$18,029.84. Note that the cost per student is calculated based on the total number of student enrolled (regardless of enrollment duration) rather than cost for full-time equivalent student, which would be higher.

The ECSE program is supported 100% through State and Federal funds that are paid through DESE for the previous school year. All expenditures are governed by DESE guidelines. SSD purchases technology for staff such as personal computers and laptops.

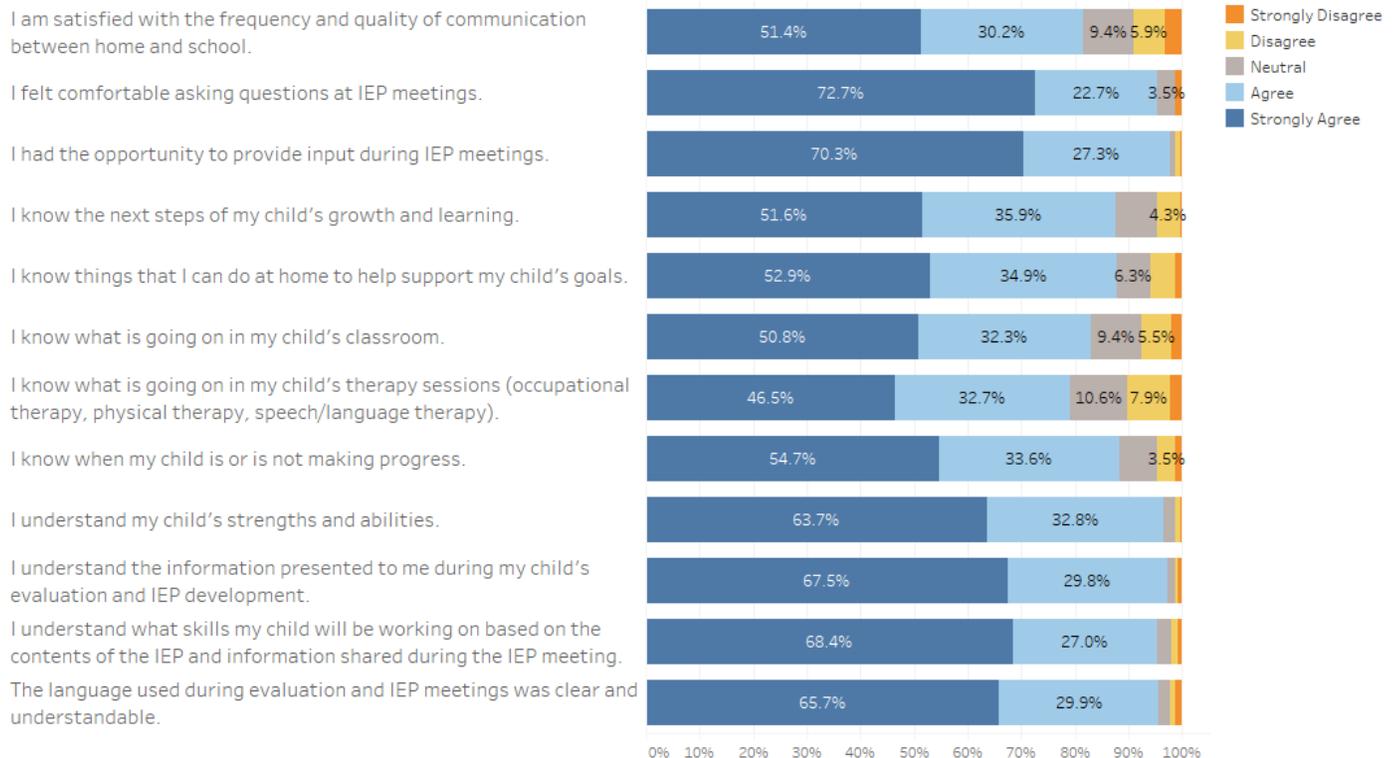
¹ ECSE cost information is made available in November or December each year.

Monitoring Results

Voice of Customer Assessment:

The ECSE program administers biennial surveys to SSD staff, partner district staff, and parents/families. The surveys assess a variety of factors pertaining to collaboration, involvement, professional learning, service delivery, and stakeholder preferences. Surveys were most recently administered in spring of 2018. ECSE administrators utilize survey results to gauge customer satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement. Parent survey results are provided below. Results indicate that parents largely understand the services being provided to their child, are aware of their child’s progress, and have been afforded adequate opportunities to provide input during meetings. In comparison to other parent survey results, a smaller percentage of parents indicated knowing what occurs in their child’s therapy sessions (though agreement with this item was still fairly high at 79%).

2017-18 ECSE Parent Survey Results (N=256; response rate approximately 22%)



Results of the IEP survey provide additional voice of customer feedback. See Objective 3.1 below.

In addition, monthly meetings are held with ECSE coalition districts. County-wide meetings with our partner districts are conducted twice a year. In addition, each ECSE area coordinator has scheduled regular meetings with partner district early childhood administration to discuss district-specific concerns. These structures provide opportunity for regular two-way input and feedback.

Objective 1.1: Develop and enhance quality research-based and developmentally-appropriate educational programs designed to support preschool students with IEPs, allowing them to enter kindergarten programming with the skills needed to be successful kindergarten students.

Measure: ECSE Common Assessment (areas of Literacy and Social and Emotional Development). Percentage of students demonstrating a positive improvement trend.

Performance Target: 90% (baseline year)

Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable): N/A

Monitoring Schedule: Three times per year.

Results: 2017-18 was the initial year of implementation for the new Early Childhood common assessments. The common assessments were designed internally with the intention of assessing student outcomes in a more meaningful way than occurs through the DESE Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) assessment instruments². A new system of data collection through SSD's Sharepoint system also began this year. Results are provided for students who had at least 2 of a possible 3 assessments entered into the system for the school year.

The respective common assessments are administered to students on the basis of eligibility category, goals, and services. For example, if a student was receiving services under the eligibility category of Language Impairment only, that student would likely be administered the Literacy common assessment. Students receiving services under the category of Speech Impairment only are not administered the common assessment.

Literacy and Social Emotional Development sections of the assessment were chosen as to focus on as they relate to a department goal of ensuring that every student has the skills to be an independent learner in kindergarten. Pre-literacy skills are most commonly identified by our partner districts as important for incoming kindergarteners. Social Emotional Development skills also contribute to a successful kindergarten transition and include positive peer interactions and executive functioning skills such as cognitive flexibility and self-control.

Results are provided in the table below. Though Literacy and Social Emotional Development are the focus of the Objective, results for all five content areas are shown. The target for Literacy was met, while the percent of students demonstrating a positive trend in Social Emotional Development fell just below the target.

ECSE Common Assessment Results 2017-18

	Negative Trend	No/Flat Trend	Positive Trend	Target	Count of Students with 2+ scores
Literacy	5.2%	3.9%	90.9%	90% (Met)	518
Social Emotional Development	5.9%	4.6%	89.5%	90% (Not met)	564
Math	4.7%	7.0%	88.4%	N/A	473
Science	5.4%	20.2%	74.5%	N/A	466
Physical Development	4.8%	3.4%	91.7%	N/A	495

Objective 2.1: Working with ECSE partner districts, we will increase inclusive opportunities for all students. Students will receive inclusive services.³

Measure: The proportion of students whose services become more inclusive over the course of the school year. Greater inclusiveness is indicated by a reduction in special education minutes *or* a change to what would be considered a “less restrictive” placement. Only students with data at each of three periods (fall, winter, and spring) across the year will be included in the analysis.

Performance Target: Increase over baseline.

Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable): None available

Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year in January and June.

Results: The target was not met. Among students with data at each of three assessment points across the year, the percent whose services became more “inclusive” (per the definition above) across the year declined slightly from 22.5% to 21.7%. One possible explanation for this trend is the perceived increase in students with significant needs entering early childhood programs. Potential evidence for increasing severity includes the growing number of applied behavioral

² SSD continues to assess students via the DESE ECOs as well. In contrast to the common assessments, all ECSE students are administered the ECOs.

³ Note that the inclusionary practices within a particular district are influenced by policies of that district. In early childhood programs where tuition funds provide the bulk of operating expenses, there may be less incentive to provide inclusive opportunities for students with IEPs.

analysis (ABA) minutes provided to students; the number of students receiving ABA services has grown from 147 in 2016 to 209 in 2017 and 256 in 2018.

ECSE Inclusiveness Results

	Percent More Inclusive Services Over Year	Count of Students with Fall, Winter, and Spring Data
2017-18	21.7%	483
2016-17	22.5%	645

Though not an evaluation measure, a second indicator of inclusiveness is the proportion of nondisabled students who participate in SSD early childhood programs.⁴ This proportion has increased from 11.0% in 2016 to 12.1% in 2017 and 12.9% in 2018.

Objective 3.1: Promote, facilitate and enhance parent/family, student, and community collaboration to meet the needs of all students.

Measure: Average of ratings on District IEP Survey item, “On a scale of 0 to 10 and based on your experiences in this school year, how would you describe the special education services your student has received?” (zero is labelled “Very unfavorably, 5 is labelled “Neutral”, and 10 is labelled “Very favorably”)

Performance Target: Average rating of 9.0.

Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable): Average rating for SSD as a whole.

Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year in January and June.

Results: The average rating target of 9.0 was met in 2016-17 and nearly met in 2017-18. The average IEP Survey score for this item during the 2016-17 school year for parents of ECSE students was 9.1 (based on 263 responses). The average score for the 2017-18 school year was 8.9 (based on 241 responses). In 2017-18, 84% of parents assigned an overall rating for special education services of 8 or higher out of 10.

In comparison, the average rating across student grade levels K-12 was lower than that for ECSE (8.4 in 2016-17 and 8.5 in 2017-18). For grade levels other than early childhood, 78% of parents rated special education services as an 8 or higher out of 10. In addition, more parent surveys were completed for ECSE than for any other grade level.

IEP Survey Results

	2016-17	2017-18
ECSE Average Rating (0-10 Scale)	9.1	8.9
K-12 SSD Average Rating (0-10 Scale)	8.4	8.5
ECSE Rating 8 or Higher	86.7%	84.4%
K-12 SSD Rating 8 or Higher	77.9%	77.8%

Note. District response rate for the IEP survey in 2017-18 was 16.2%.

Ongoing Evaluation Planning: (select all that apply)

- Continue to monitor using same metrics and schedule.
- Revise evaluation indicators and metrics.

Proposed revisions: In addition to evaluating the proportion of students who made any gain at all on the ECSE common assessment, assess and establish a target for the average magnitude of gain.

- Conduct an in-depth evaluation.

Estimated month/year the evaluation is to be completed: _____

- Revise the program description/plan.

⁴ SSD coordinates with coalition district partners to provide services to some portion of non-disabled pre-k students annually. Selection of non-disabled students to participate in SSDs early childhood program is determined by the partner district.

Other action(s) for improvement: _____

Rationale for Selection(s): Provides an additional method of evaluating student growth.