



Evaluation of Purchase of Service Agencies

**Ms. Anne Wynn
Dr. Joan Zavitsky
POS Study Group**

June 2006

Introduction

Under the charge of SSD superintendent, the SSD POS study group was formed to conduct a review of the purchase of service agencies with whom we currently contract.

Question

Are the purchase of service agencies meeting SSD student's educational goals in a cost effective manner?

Best Practices

The study group developed a rubric of quality indicators based on SSD Program Evaluation best practices, SSD Board of Education policies, and standards from Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary that are applicable for agencies. Quality indicator areas were divided into four areas: social/emotional/behavioral, staff, curriculum and student outcomes.

Social Emotional Behavioral

Social emotional behavioral (SEB) quality indicators are based on board approved ED Program Evaluation best practices. For example: effective behavior management incorporates the following: (a) clear rules and routines established and explicitly taught; (b) an integrated discipline system; (c) effective use of classroom space; and (d) planned schedules (Evertson, Emmer, Clements, & Worsham, 1994; Frey & George-Nichols, 2003; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Neel, Cessna, Borock, & Bechard, 2003; Stage & Quiroz, 1997). Crisis planning and management are also key components of effective behavior management and should be a part of the student's intervention plan (NASP, 2003). Students with social emotional concerns often lack access to therapy and yet mental health is directly linked to educational outcomes; therefore, good counseling strategies should be employed to assist students in personalizing and internalizing information (NASP, 2003; Neel, Cessna, Borock, & Bechard, 2003).

Staff

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires that special educators are highly-qualified by August 1, 2006. To ensure all children in the state of Missouri are taught by highly-qualified teachers, all Missouri teachers participate in high-quality professional development each year (No Child Left Behind, NCLB).

Curriculum

Offering a comprehensive curriculum that includes specific, measurable goals and is aligned with the Show-Me-Standards and Grade Level Expectations (GLE) is an expectation from MSIP and DESE. Research also indicates that quality academic instruction (Neel, Cessna, Borak & Behard, 2003), planning for transition and the ability to earn high school credit (NASP, 2003) are keys of an effective program. Research finds that organized social skills training is an

effective strategy to support positive behavior change for students with SEB and those at-risk. (Peacock Hill Working Group, 1991).

Outcomes

Evidences of student outcomes in the areas of academic progress, social emotional progress, and movement to least restrictive environment are requirements of NCLB, IDEA, Missouri Performance Plan, SSD Rolling Plan Goal 1, and SSD board policy IGBJ (Least Restrictive Environment) April 22, 2003, regarding student progress.

Methodology

SSD POS Study Group Members

Ms. Anne Wynn	Area Coordinator, Purchase of Service
Ms. Amber Auslander	Effective Practice Specialist, Social Work Services
Dr. Paul Bauer	Director, Special Education Schools
Dr. Chialin Hsieh	Administrator, Program Evaluation
Mr. Donald McCary	Director, ABA
Ms. Angie O'Brien	Area Coordinator, Kirkwood
Mr. Dave Pentz	Area Coordinator, ABA
Ms. Michelle Quinlivan	Assistant Principal, Litzsinger School
Dr. Joan Zavitsky	Associate Superintendent, Curriculum and Assessment

Ad Hoc Group Member

Mr. Rich Carver	Director, Chief Financial Officer
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Documentation Reviewed

- Agency SEB data
- Agency staff statistics
- Agency curriculum
- Longitudinal performance data (outcome data) including academic progress, therapeutic progress, and movement to LRE
- Site visit data
- District financial data

Agencies

Epworth School
Edgewood School
Evangelical School
Logos School
Giant Steps
St. Vincent School
Metropolitan School
Marygrove School

The study group did not evaluate Child Center of Our Lady due to the schools' closure May 2006.

Design & Procedures

The study group identified 45 quality indicators in 4 areas—14 indicators in Social Emotional Behavior (SEB), 12 indicators in Staff, 14 indicators in Curriculum and Assessment, and 5 indicators in Outcomes. The study group evaluated the cost effectiveness of each purchase of service agency on per student, per diem basis in relation to the outcomes. (See Appendix A-Quality Indicators for details).

The study group sent agency directors or principals a letter asking them to submit documentation regarding the agency SEB programming, staff, curriculum, and student outcomes. The study group met to review documentation submitted by each agency. To ensure inter-rater consistency in scoring, the study group chose one file and the entire group reviewed the data together and determined what data or evidences would meet the quality indicator on the rubric. The study group then split into sub-groups who each took a criteria area for all of the agency files that were reviewed. Following the file review, teams completed site visits to clarify reported information. The study group reviewed the indicator scores again to minimize scoring discrepancies following the site visits.

Each agency was mailed a copy of their scoring rubric on May 25, 2006. The agencies had an opportunity to submit evidence that could result in a change in their score. The additional documentation was due on June 7, 2006. The study group reviewed the additional documentation to reach consensus on appropriate changes.

Results

Quality Indicator Areas

Table 1 displays the percentage of quality indicators each agency met in each area.

Table 1 Percentage of Quality Indicator Area that Agency Met and Cost per Child per Day for Each Agency

Quality Indicator Area	% of Quality Indicators That Agency Met in Each Area								
	Epworth	Edgewood	Evangelical	Logos	Giant Steps	St. Vincent	Metropolitan	Marygrove	
SEB (14)	100%	93%	93%	100%	43%	71%	33%	92%	
Staff (12)	92%	92%	75%	92%	67%	33%	45%	92%	
Curriculum (14)	86%	64%	64%	85%	23%	46%	57%	79%	
Outcomes (5)	100%	60%	80%	60%	20%	20%	0%	80%	
Cost Per Child Per Day (excluding ESY & transportation)	\$ 99.3	\$ 104.5	\$ 91.8	\$105.1	\$ 150.0	\$ 93.4	\$124.0	\$ 92.7	

Epworth scored 90% or better in three of the four of the quality indicators. Epworth's scores were over 90% in SEB, Student Outcomes and Curriculum. Epworth met 93% of all quality indicators.

Logos' scores were 90% or greater in two of the four indicator areas. Logos had scores over 90% in the areas of SEB and Staff. Logos met 88% of all quality indicators.

Marygrove's scores were 90% or greater in two of the four indicator areas. Marygrove had scores over 90% in the areas of SEB and Staff. Marygrove met 86% of all quality indicators.

Edgewood's scores were 90% or greater in two of the four areas with scores over 90% in the areas of SEB and Staff. Edgewood met 80% of all quality indicators.

Evangelical's scored 90% or greater in one of the four areas. Evangelical had a score over 90% in the area of SEB. Evangelical met 78% of all quality indicators.

St. Vincent scored below 90% in all quality indicator areas. St. Vincent met 48% of all quality indicators.

Giant Steps scored below 90% in all quality indicators. Giant Steps met 41% of all quality indicators.

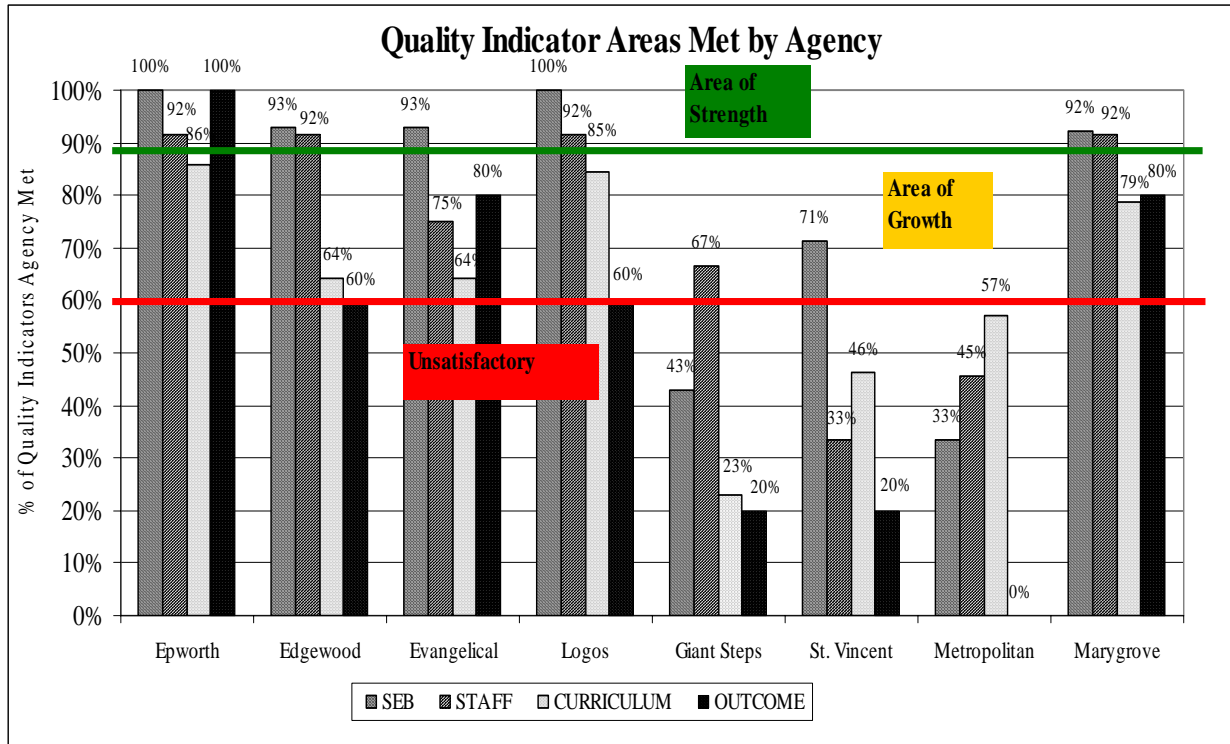
Metropolitan scored below 90% in each of the quality indicator areas. Metropolitan met 40% of all quality indicators.

Cost Effectiveness in Relation to Quality Indicator Areas

Cost per day per student is listed in Table 1. The cost per day does not include ESY and transportation expenses. Also excluded is the additional expense of facility rental for Giant Steps. The cost per day ranged from \$91.80 per day for Evangelical to \$150.00 per day for Giant Steps.

Figure 1 depicts school performance on the quality indicator areas.

Figure 1. Quality Indicator Areas



45 Quality Indicators

Table 2 displays the percentage of all 45 quality indicators met by each agency and cost per child per day.

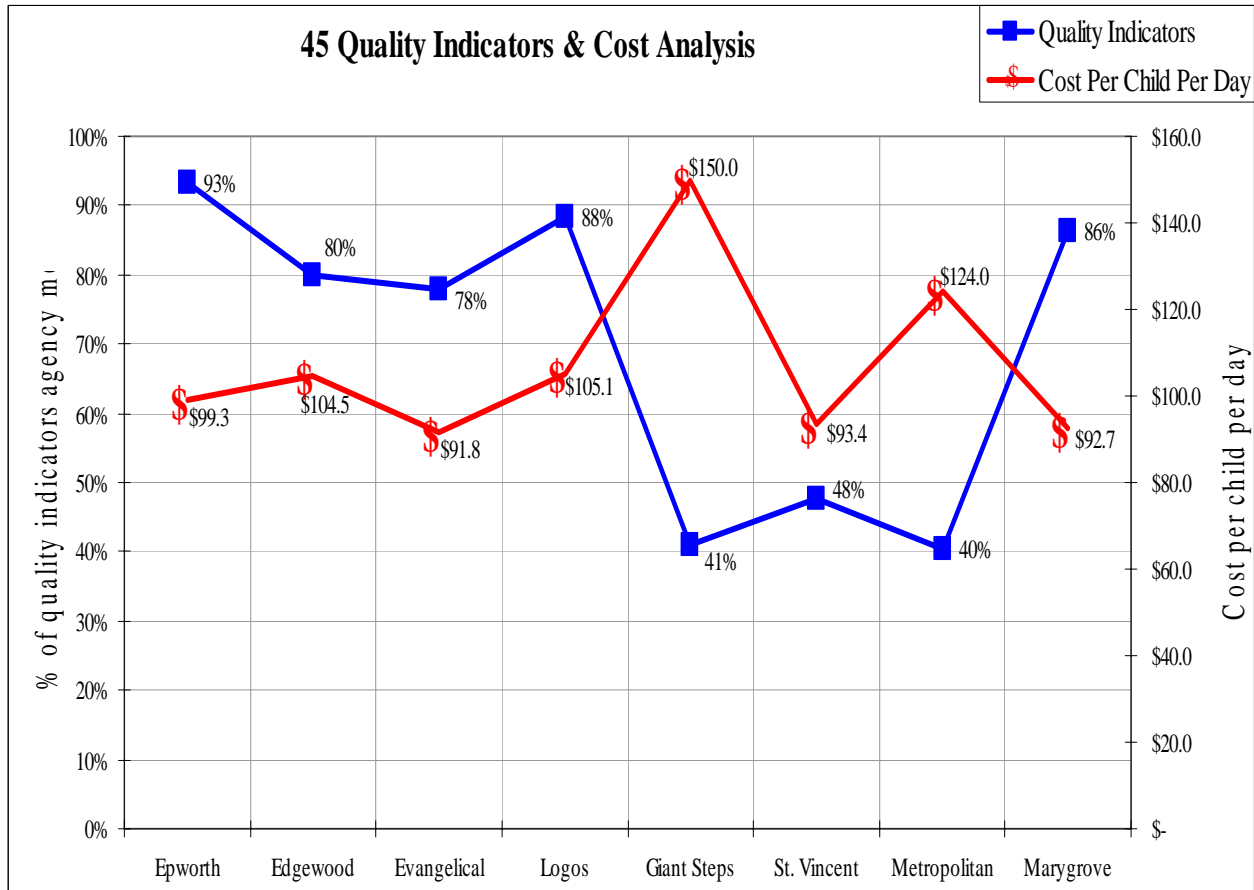
Table 2 Percentage of All 45 Quality Indicators that Agency Met and Cost per Child per Day for Each Agency

Quality Indicator	% of Quality Indicators That Agency Met							
	Epworth	Edgewood	Evangelical	Logos	Giant Steps	St. Vincent	Metropolitan	Marygrove
All 45 Quality Indicators	93%	80%	78%	88%	41%	48%	40%	86%
Cost Per Child Per Day (excluding ESY & transportation)	\$ 99.3	\$ 104.5	\$ 91.8	\$ 105.1	\$ 150.0	\$ 93.4	\$ 124.0	\$ 92.7

Cost Effectiveness in Relation to 45 Quality Indicators

Figure 2 depicts the percentage of quality indicators met and the cost per day for each agency. The percentage of quality indicators met by each school in each area is listed on the left hand Y axis and the total cost per day is on the right hand Y axis.

Figure 2. 45 Quality Indicators and Cost Analysis



Areas of Strength and Growth for Each Agency

This section is a summary of each agency’s areas of strength and growth. Areas in which the agency met 90% or more of the quality indicators are listed as an area of strength. Areas in which the agency met 60% to 89% of the quality indicators are listed as growth areas. Areas in which the agency met less than 60% of the quality indicators are listed as unsatisfactory. (See Appendix B for detail on each agency)

Epworth (See Appendix B-1)

Strengths - SEB, Staff and Student Outcomes

- The therapeutic program includes group and individual therapy, data collection, behavior management and post-program follow-up data

- Teachers, therapists, and administrator are appropriately certified
- Curriculum and assessment indicate student progress
- Student Outcomes in the areas of return to LRE and evidence of students' making both academic and therapeutic progress

Growth Area - Curriculum

- Expand curriculum to include more elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Develop and implement a process for review and revision of the curriculum

Edgewood (See Appendix B-2)

Strengths- SEB and Staff

- The therapeutic program includes group and individual therapy, data collection and behavior management
- Teachers and therapists have the appropriate certifications
- Student Outcomes in the areas of return to LRE and evidence of students' making therapeutic progress

Growth Areas- Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Expand curriculum to include an organized social skills curriculum
- Develop and implement a process for review and revision of the curriculum
- Expand curriculum to include more elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Develop a data collection system to track students' yearly academic progress
- Develop a process for meaningful post-program follow up

Evangelical (See Appendix B-3)

Strength- SEB

- The therapeutic program includes group and individual therapy, data collection and behavior management

Growth Areas- Staff, Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Expand curriculum to include an organized social skills curriculum
- Develop and implement a process for review and revision of the curriculum
- Expand curriculum to include more elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Develop a process for meaningful post-program follow up
- Build technology instruction into the current curriculum
- Expand assessment plan to include process for sharing results with SSD and parents

Logos (See Appendix B-4)

Strengths- SEB and Staff

- The therapeutic program includes group and individual therapy, behavior management, post-program follow-up data, and evidence that students are making therapeutic progress
- Teachers, therapists, and administrator are appropriately certified

Growth Areas- Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Build technology instruction into the current curriculum
- Expand assessment plan to include process for sharing results with SSD and parents
- Increase number of students returning to LRE

Giant Steps (See Appendix B-5)

Growth Area- Staff

- Employ a certified administrator
- Employ a certified therapist/social worker
- Develop a system for notifying parents in writing when a classroom is not being taught by certificated staff

Unsatisfactory Areas- SEB, Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Develop an organized curriculum aligned with the Show-Me-Standards or GLE with measurable goals for each grade level
- Develop an organized social skills curriculum and organized remedial program
- Offer elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Offer an organized transition program for high school students
- Develop a process for meaningful post-program follow up
- Build technology instruction into curriculum
- Expand assessment plan to include process for sharing results with SSD and parents
- Train staff in curriculum
- Develop behavior management policy/procedures
- Develop a system for collecting data on restraints and seclusions
- Offer group therapy for students
- Develop goals for graduates
- Develop a data collection system to track students' yearly academic progress
- Increase number of students returning to LRE

St. Vincent (See Appendix B-6)

Growth Area- SEB

- Develop a system for tracking and evaluating therapy minutes
- Offer family supports/therapy
- Collaborate with outside resources

Unsatisfactory Areas- SEB, Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Employ other certified staff as needed (OT/SLP)
- Employ certified/licensed therapists
- Develop a professional development plan for staff
- Develop a system for notifying parents in writing when a classroom is not being taught by certificated staff
- Develop an organized curriculum aligned with the Show-Me-Standards or GLE with measurable goals for each grade level
- Develop an organized social skills curriculum and organized remedial program
- Offer elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Offer an organized transition program for high school students
- Develop a process for meaningful post-program follow up
- Build technology instruction into curriculum
- Expand assessment plan to include process for sharing results with SSD and parents
- Train staff in curriculum
- Develop behavior management policy/procedures
- Develop a system for collecting data on restraints and seclusions
- Offer group therapy for students
- Develop a data collection system to track students' therapeutic progress
- Increase number of students returning to LRE
- Employ certified teachers for each classroom
- Employ a certified administrator

Metropolitan (See Appendix B-7)

Unsatisfactory Areas- SEB, Staff, Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Employ other certified staff as needed (OT/SLP)
- Employ certified/licensed therapists
- Develop a professional development plan for staff
- Develop an organized social skills curriculum and organized remedial program
- Offer elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Offer an organized transition program for high school students
- Develop a process for meaningful post-program follow up
- Build technology instruction into curriculum

- Train staff in curriculum
- Develop behavior management policy/procedures
- Offer individual and group therapy for students
- Develop a data collection system to track students' academic and therapeutic progress
- Increase number of students returning to LRE
- Employ a certified administrator
- Develop an ESY program
- Develop plan/procedure for medication administration
- Collaborate with outside resources

Marygrove (See Appendix B-8)

Strengths- SEB and Staff

- The therapeutic program includes individual therapy, data collection, behavior management and post-program follow-up data
- Teachers and therapists are appropriately certified
- Curriculum and assessment indicate student progress
- Student Outcomes in the areas of return to LRE and evidence of students' making therapeutic progress

Growth Areas- Curriculum and Student Outcomes

- Develop a data collection system to track students' academic progress
- Offer group therapy during the school day
- Offer elective/exploratory classes for middle and high school students
- Train staff in the curriculum
- Expand assessment plan to include process for sharing results with SSD and parents
- Develop comprehensive functional analysis of behaviors and behavior intervention plans

Recommendations

Short Term Actions

Review information with each agency director

Invite parents/guardians to review all information

Discontinue sending additional day students to St. Vincent and terminate contract.

Discontinue and terminate contracts with Metropolitan and Giant Steps

Submit applications to existing agencies for current Metropolitan, St. Vincent and Giant Steps students

Request For Proposal's will be made to the agencies we contract with to determine if they can service the students from the agencies whose contracts were not renewed.

Reconvene IEP's as needed

Collect information from DESE regarding timelines for each agency's next DESE review date

Long Term Actions

Every three years SSD will conduct an evaluation of the Purchase of Service Agencies.

Annually each agency will provide student outcome data (Quality Indicator Area 4) to SSD.

A follow-up will be conducted twice a year for agencies with two or more growth quality indicator areas to review progress on targeted area until quality area becomes strength.

Review agencies teachers, therapists and administrators certifications annually.

References

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004).
<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/IDEA2004.html>
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- Special School District Rolling Plan (2006). Goal I: Improve Student Achievement Level.
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- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (2003). Position statement on mental health services in the schools.
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- Evertson, C., Emmer, T., Clements, S., & Worsham, E. (1994). Classroom management for elementary teachers. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
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- Stage, S. A., & Quiroz, D. R. (1997). A meta-analysis of interventions to decrease disruptive classroom behavior in public education settings. School Psychology Review, 26, 333-368.
- Peacock Hill Working Group. (1991). Problems and promises in special education and related services for children and youth with emotional or behavioral disorders. Behavioral Disorders, 16, 299-313.

February 8, 2006

«Last_Name»
«job»
«Company_Name»
«Address_Line_1»
«City»

Dear «Title»:

Several years ago, Special School District undertook a rigorous and exhaustive program evaluation process. To date sixty-one (61) program evaluations have been completed and approved by the SSD Board. Shortly, a SSD staff committee will conduct a review of the purchase of service agencies with whom we currently contract to determine whether – and how well – students’ educational goals are being met. The committee will also assess cost-effectiveness.

We anticipate that this review will occur within the next 45-60 days. While SSD has collected data on students’ progress on IEP goals, graduation rates, post program follow-up, restraint and dropout rates, you will be asked for additional data. An on-site meeting with your agency will be scheduled in order to discuss additional questions about process and outcomes.

Ann Wynn is the liaison on this project. Should you have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Ann (314-989-8297) or Mary Ann Tietjens (314-989-8379). I thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

Peter T. Kachris, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

cc: J. Zavitsky
M. Tietjens
A. Wynn

Dear _____,

As a follow-up to Dr. Kachris's letter dated 2/8/2006, I am writing to clarify the specific data that the Purchase of Service Study Group would like to review. Over the next 45 to 60 days, the committee will be investigating 4 primary areas of focus: curriculum, staff (certifications & ratios), social/emotional data, and positive student outcomes. The study group will examine the data submitted by each agency prior to a scheduled site visit. By Thursday, March 9, 2006 please complete the attached staffing grids and submit to me along with the following data:

1. List of specific class offerings for each grade level. Please include ESY and any transition or remedial programs.
2. Assessment plans
3. Copies of last DESE review information
4. Therapeutic & behavior management plans & policies. Please include restraint & seclusion data
5. Professional Development Plan for staff. Please include information about your teacher evaluation process.
6. School Improvement Plans
7. Intake & discharge criteria
8. Data regarding how behavioral and academic progress is monitored & evaluated
9. LRE data – Please include the number of students who have transitioned 100% of the time to a lesser restrictive environment during the '04-'05 school year and semester data for the '05-'06 school year.
10. Post-program follow up data

After the data is reviewed, the study group will contact you to arrange a site visit. At this time, please have your school's curriculum guides available. When scheduling the site visit, please allow 20 to 30 minutes to discuss any additional questions about your program. The proposed weeks for site visits are the weeks of March 13th, March 20th and March 27th.

Please call me with questions regarding the data collection or the attached grids. The study group will be presenting a report to the SSD School Board in April.

Thank You,

Anne Wynn