



Special School District

At-Risk Services Program Evaluation

Special Education Schools, Court Program & Bridges

Paul Bauer, Chair

Board Approved: June 9, 2009



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Standard Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

As required by the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) standards, school districts must evaluate At-Risk Services biennially. The question approved by the Board of Education for the present program evaluation was as follows: *What is the nature of at-risk programs and how do they impact student outcomes?* The present evaluation includes a review of services provided in the special education schools and the Bridges program. Based on stakeholder review of the data, strengths, concerns and recommendations are noted.

Results

Strengths

- The Bridges Program enables students whose behavior interferes with their receiving their education at their home school.
- The number of out of school suspensions has decreased each year.
- The drop-out rate and attendance rate have improved each year.
- Students are earning credit toward graduation through PLATO.

Concerns

- Due to students' grade levels and their duration of stay at Bridges, the MAP is not an appropriate measure of student achievement or progress.
- The only formative assessment available at Bridges is Orchard. At this time data from that software are not sufficient to measure progress.

Recommendations

- Identify and implement a system of continuous formative assessments.
- Expand use of PLATO software for students in all grades.



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Program Evaluation Question(s)

What is the nature of at-risk programs and how do they impact student outcomes?

I. Program/Service Information

1. Name of Program or Services:
At-Risk Programs
2. Personnel Responsible for Evaluation and Program (list):
Paul Bauer
3. Demographic Description of Program:
Location(s): One
Number of staff – 14
Participants – 21 students (as of 4/8/09)
Length of program/service: Ongoing
4. Date of Evaluation (Year/Duration):
August 2008 – April 2009
5. Goal/Objective of Program/Services:
The purpose of the at-risk programs in the special education schools is to provide students supports to progress toward graduation and to achieve their post-secondary goals.
6. Brief description of relationship between program goals, CSIP and MSIP Standards:
MSIP 6.3.4: The district has implemented effective instructional programs designed to meet the assessed needs of its students, as well as the practices and procedures needed to support these programs. The district identifies and provides targeted instruction or other needed services/interventions for educationally-disadvantaged, ESOL, migrant, and homeless students, as well as students who may, for other reasons, be at risk of leaving school without completing high school.
Goal I: Student Performance: Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals.



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

- Assessment statistics
- Attendance rate
- Dropout rate
- Suspension rate
- Achievement data
- Movement to LRE

III. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation:

| Name | Role |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Paul Bauer | Director |
| Wendi Pendergrass | Principal, Bridges Program |
| Karen Walsh | Effective Practices Specialist |

IV. Results

Services Provided to All Students

According to the DESE Career Education office, an “at-risk” student is one who is currently enrolled in school, identified as a potential dropout and experiencing difficulty with:

- Academics
- Discipline
- Social conditions
- Economic conditions
- Other areas that relate to a students ability to become a productive member of the workforce after graduation

The students who attend the SSD special education schools all have a disability. In addition, they can receive special education and related services appropriate for their needs only in a separate school. Thus, these students present many of the above characteristics. As a result, the special education schools programs for these students in a variety of ways through special education instruction and services provided in special education schools. These programs include:

- small class sizes
- individualized instruction
- school guidance and counseling
- social work
- psychological counseling



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- support to parents
- computer-based instruction through PLATO and Orchard
- Title IA Reading services in eligible special education schools
- Title ID Reading services in courts programs
- consultation with the district's consulting psychiatrist
- consultation with the district's medical consultant
- crisis intervention

In summary, the services that the district provides in separate special education schools are aimed at providing students the supports and teaching the skills they will need to succeed in school and after graduation. The effectiveness of the special education schools and Title programs is reported in other program evaluation reports to the Board of Education.

Bridges Program

Description

In addition to the above services, the Bridges program provides at-risk students services funded in part through a competitive grant from DESE. The purpose of this grant is to promote implementation of alternative school programs/services to address needs of students with violent, abusive, and chronically disruptive behaviors. This program is an off-campus "store front" school for students in grades 7-12. These students are assigned to Bridges due to serious and repeated behavior incidents including fighting, bullying, verbal assaults, threats of harm to others, insubordination, physical aggression, and truancy.

The curriculum employed by the Bridges Program parallels other school districts, but also adds social skills training, conflict resolution and aggression replacement training. The academic curriculum provides instruction in core content areas for students in grades 7-8 and high school credit for grades 9 through 12 through classroom instruction and through the PLATO software system. As of the end of the first semester of the 2008-09 school year, 20 students were enrolled in the program.

Starting with the 2007-08 school year, SSD received a Safe School Grant for the Bridges program. This grant funds professional development for staff and computer hardware for instructional purposes. In addition, the grant pays for the following:

1. One full-time guidance counselor – this staff member does the following:
 - a. implements the Right Choices social skills program, the Bully-Proofing program, and the Tough Kid Toolbox program with students, staff, and parents
 - b. provides individual and small group counseling to students
 - c. communicates and collaborates with outside agencies and providers



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- d. assists students in developing long-range educational and career plans
- e. serves on the school's crisis team

As of the end of the first semester this year, the guidance counselor had provided 3640 minutes of direct responsive services to students. The district measures the effectiveness of the above services through student outcomes (suspension, attendance, etc.).

2. Licenses for the PLATO software and hardware for that software – the PLATO software provides students the opportunity to start, complete, or recover credit for the high school courses needed for to meet graduation requirements. The software includes activities completed online, paper-pencil activities completed individually, and activities completed with the teacher.

In addition to grant-funded staff, Bridges has four teachers, four paraprofessionals, a social worker, a nurse, a secretary and a principal.

Attendance

The attendance rate at Bridges has increased each of the last three years. The student attendance rate in 2006-07 was 64%. In 2007-08, that rate increased to 70%. As of the April 30, 2009, the average attendance rate at Bridges was 72.48%. At the end of the 2007-08 school year, 16 students were enrolled at Bridges. Enrollment at the end of the first semester was 20 students.

Dropout Rate

As of December 2008 no students had dropped out of Bridges during the 2008-09 school year. This year-to-date performance is an improvement from 2007-08, when the program reported three drop-outs, for a drop-out rate of 8.7 percent. During the four years prior to 2007-08, the program reported no drop-outs.

Crisis Intervention/Our of School Suspensions

During the first semester of this school year, students lost 14,638 minutes of instruction while in crisis. The amount of lost instructional time in August was 2803 minutes, increasing to 4373 minutes and 4356 minutes in September and October. However, the minutes of time in crisis dropped to 2031 in November and 1075 in December. Minutes of intervention from the social worker show roughly the same pattern, increasing from 510 in August to 1100 in September, then dropping to 900, 585, and 330 minutes in October, November, and December. During 2006-08, Bridges had 88 incidents of out-of-school suspension. This number decreased to 29 in 2007-08. As of the end of April 2009, 17 students had been suspended from Bridges 31 times for a total of 117 days, including part-time students suspended by their home districts. Part time student suspensions accounted for 7 of the 17 total suspensions and 61 of the 117 total days.



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Achievement Data

PLATO/Credits: As of December 2008, five students had used the PLATO software. These students work in the software from one to three hours daily under the supervision of a teacher or paraprofessional. Altogether, these students had earned 3 credits toward graduation.

Academic Progress: In addition to the PLATO, students work on Orchard software. Orchard provides computerized assessment and targeted instruction to students based on state standards. Students participate in monthly assessments at their instructional level. At this time, formative data are not sufficient to measure student progress.

MAP Assessment: Students typically exit the Bridges program after one year. In addition, many students there who take the MAP test do so for only Math or Communication Arts. As a result, the number of test scores is very small each year (2008 Comm. Arts = 8, 2008 Mathematics=10), and a specific student's performance from year to year cannot be tracked. A review of MAP results since 2005-06 shows the following:

- The Math Index Score was the same from 2006 to 2007 but increased in 2008.
- The Communication Arts Index Score increased from 2006 to 2007, then dropped to its lowest level in 2008.
- The percentage of students in the Level Not Determined category decreased each year, to zero in 2008.

Movement to LRE

During the first semester of this school year, four students moved to a less restrictive environment for school: one returned full-time to his home school, one returned for half of each day, one returned for two classes each day, and one returned for one class daily.

V. Summary

Strengths

- The Bridges Program enables students whose behavior interferes with their receiving their education at their home school.
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Concerns

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Recommendations

- Identify and implement a system of continuous formative assessments
- Expand use of PLATO software for students in all grades

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

Person responsible to champion action plan: Paul Bauer

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education: Bi-Annually

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation