



# **Special School District**

## **Facilities Safety Program Evaluation**

Larry Thompson, Chair

Board Approved: November 11, 2008



# FACILITIES SAFETY

## Standard Program Evaluation

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### Program Evaluation Question(s)

Has the Special School District developed, implemented, and documented safety procedures to ensure that the District's facilities are safe according to 4th Cycle Missouri School Improvement Program (MISP) standard 8.11?

#### I. Program/Service Information

1. Name of Program or Services: Facilities, Safety

2. Personnel Responsible for Evaluation and Program:

Larry Thompson, Director of Facilities and Operations

3. Demographic Description of Program:

Location(s): All District owned buildings and leased properties that house Special School District students.

Number of staff: Estimated number of staff involved in program is approximately 30.

Participants: Principals, Assistant Principals, Teachers, SSD Safety Committees, Department Heads, Program Directors, Loss Prevention Consultants, Risk Managers, Environmental Specialists

Length of program/service: Ongoing

4. Date of Evaluation (Year/Duration):

September-October 2008

5. Goal/Objective of Program/Services:

To provide a safe physical environment for students, visitors and staff.

6. Brief description of relationship between program goals, CSIP and MSIP Standards:

Program will ensure that appropriate personnel for identifying potential safety hazards periodically inspect facilities and grounds; corrections are made promptly to ensure that local and/or state public safety requirements as well as MSIP standard 8.11 for safety are met. Program will verify that all observed safety and emergency devices are in place and operational. These include emergency exits, fire extinguishers, equipment safety zones, equipment safeguards, eye wash stations, safety glasses, fire blankets and fire suppression systems. The program



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will also ensure that the proper documentation exists for the disposal of hazardous materials, emergency/safety drills and that a comprehensive plan for crisis management and emergency preparedness is in place.

### II. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered

- Outside Safety Inspections
- Internal Safety Inspections
- Review of Accident Reports
- AHERA Reports
- Department of Natural Resources Inspection Reports
- Environmental/Occupational Safety and Health Consulting/Training Reports
- Local Fire Department Inspections
- St. Louis County Public Works Inspection Reports
- Emergency Drill Logs
- Missouri Center for Safe Schools Safety Inspection

### III. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation:

The committee consists of the following individuals and currently meets on a monthly basis. Activities include reviewing and making recommendations on information received from various safety inspections, building concerns, state and local inspections as well as the District's internal incident reporting process.

- Kevin Hoffman, Senior Loss Prevention Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher & Co
- Michelle Wilson, Claims Investigator, Corporate Claims Management
- Christopher Byrne, Environmental Specialist, Sitex Environmental Inc.
- Jon L. Begley, Compliance Inspector, Department of Natural Resources

District wide Safety Committee:

- Joan Zavitsky, Associate Superintendent for Learning and Assessment
- Jerry Rudolph, Maintenance Manager, Special School District
- Larry Thompson, Director of Facilities and Operations, Special School District
- Debra DArcey, Director Health Services
- Don Hosutt, Administrator Student Services Tech Schools
- Robert Humphries, Warehouse Manager
- Jeff Sherrill, Maintenance Worker
- Kenny Mulder, Transportation Director
- Yvonne LaJeunesse, Teacher
- Marsha Myers, Principal Special Education
- Monica Hudson, Insurance/Worker's Compensation



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### IV. Results

#### Outside Safety Inspections

The District's buildings are annually inspected by various local and state agencies for compliance. These include inspections from the County Public Works for mechanical equipment safety, Public Health for food service and local Fire Department inspections for fire safety compliance. These reports are reviewed by the Director of Facilities and Operations and shared with the Safety Committee if necessary. Recommendations received are handled through the District's Maintenance Department immediately.

#### Internal Safety Inspections

The District's Senior Loss Control Consultant and District staff conduct internal safety inspections annually. The internal safety inspections consist of approximately 78 individual safety items that address both state and local status as well as required MSIP standards. Inspection reports are shared with the buildings administration staff as well as the Safety Committee. Based on the information received, the Safety Committee will make recommendations to the appropriate individuals or department. The majority of these recommendations are less serious in nature with items such as anchoring of shelving, proper extension cords and general housekeeping making up most of the recommendations. As a result of inspections and conversations with building and program administrators, the Safety Committee has also noted a concern that no one individual oversees the overall safety program for the entire District. Responsibilities are spread over several individuals resulting in inconsistencies and lack of direction.

#### Review of Accident Reports

A subcommittee of the District wide Safety Committee (Incident Review Committee) reviews all accident reports generated by Special School District employees on a monthly basis. These include both incidents that take place in District owned or leased buildings as well as partner district buildings. The committee is responsible for identifying safety concerns or trends and makes recommendations that will reduce the number of incidents and Worker's Compensation payouts. Although a reduction in the number of worker's compensation claims over the past 3 years has been noted resulting in a reduction of \$421,016 in District incurred cost, the issue remains an area of concern.

#### AHERA Reports

As with all government-funded facilities, the District is required to follow the regulations outlined in the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. Twice a year the District undergoes an inspection of its facilities for possible asbestos exposure. Every three years a full detailed exposure survey is conducted and the District AHERA Management Plan for each building is updated. Issues discovered during any of these inspections are presented to the Safety Committee for action and recommendations.

#### Department of Natural Resources Inspection Reports

Periodically, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducts inspections at the District's



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Technical Education Schools for compliance regarding the handling and disposal of hazardous waste. Wastes such as oil, batteries, paints, inks, HVAC oils, etc. have to be stored and disposed of in a manner that will not harm the environment. The last report received by the District in 2006 stated no issues or current violations with the DNR.

### Environmental/Occupational Safety and Health Consulting/Training Reports

Periodically, the District will receive an informational request from agencies overseeing safety programs such as the Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHA). This request is reviewed by the Safety Committee, which will then decide relevant information to supply. To date, we have received no recommendations from the information sent to these agencies.

### Local Fire Department Inspections

This outside safety inspection mainly deals with the life safety issues addressed by the local fire departments. Items addressed in these inspections can be more serious in nature and have to be corrected either immediately or within 30 days. Inspections from 2005 through 2007 had no recommendations that required immediate attention. All recommendations were to be corrected by re-inspection date (generally 30 days). District recommendations from Fire Department Inspections have decreased by 60% over the last 3 years (i.e., 2005=91, 2006=67, 2007=36). Recommendations from the Fire Department Inspections can range from minor risk to potential life safety issues. Items such as missing ceiling tiles, replacement of electrical extension cords, additional fire extinguishers, clutter, and missing floor tiles are examples of minor risk recommendations. The District received approximately 30 of these types of recommendations in 2005, 31 in 2006 and 11 in 2007. Recommendations that include missing fire extinguishers, blocked egress, blocked fire alarms and broken electrical cover plates are examples of mid-level risk items. In 2005 the District received approximately 25 of these types of recommendations, 9 in 2006 and 12 in 2007. Finally, examples of recommendations that can create life safety issues are items such as emergency exit lights not working properly, improper storage of flammable materials, alarm system troubles and blocked electrical or mechanical systems. There were approximately 36 of these types of recommendations in 2005, 27 in 2006 and 13 in 2007. The majority of these recommendations (approximately 90%) involved battery failures in emergency exit or light fixtures.

### St. Louis County Public Works Inspection Reports

The St. Louis County Public Works Department inspects all of the District's mechanical rooms and heavy equipment such as boilers, hot water heaters and elevators annually. Their purpose is to identify any safety or hazardous conditions that may exist with potentially dangerous equipment in our buildings. This information is shared with the various building administrators and Safety Committee and actions are taken if necessary. The District is also inspected annually by the Health Department for its Food Service operations and Culinary Arts Programs at the Technical Schools. No St. Louis County Public Works recommendations or violations have been noted.



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### Emergency Drill Logs

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires all school districts to conduct various drills throughout the school year. These include fire, earthquake, intruder, and various disaster drills. It is the responsibility of school administrators to ensure these drills are carried out according to the standards set by DESE.

### Missouri Center for Safe Schools Safety Inspection

In March of 2007, Russell S. Thompson, Ph.D, from the Missouri Center for Safe Schools completed a three day comprehensive safety review of the District. This 36-page document has since been labeled the “Safety Audit”. This report has and will continue to be the main focus for the District’s safety program. Several strengths were noted in the Safety Audit that included (a) an outstanding hazard communications program (material safety data sheet and hazardous waste management program), (b) the systemic approach taken by the District Safety Committee was sited as impressive, (c) the Special School District Safety Manual was noted as an excellent document, and (d) staff in our buildings held safety as a top priority in caring for both the children and the facility. Concerns noted in the Safety Audit included (a) no uniform Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards checklist that the buildings can use to ensure they are meeting the current MSIP standards in the areas of safety, (b) no standard district-wide comprehensive plan for crisis management and emergency preparedness, (c) policies that deal with safety, security, emergency preparedness and safe school legislation need to be reviewed and updated, and (d) building access control and lock down procedures need to be improved.

## **V. Discussion**

### Strengths

- A wide variety of internal and external review and inspection procedures are in place to ensure a safe physical environment for students, visitors and staff.
- The number of worker’s compensation claims over the past 3 years has decreased resulting in a reduction of \$421,016 in District incurred costs.
- No citations/violations/recommendations were noted in the most recent report received from the Department of Natural Resources.
- To date, no recommendations from agencies such as OSHA have been received.
- Fire Department inspections/recommendations have decreased by 60% over the last 3 years.
- No St. Louis County Public Works recommendations or violations have been noted.
- Based on the Missouri Center for Safe Schools Safety Inspection, the following strengths were noted:
  - Outstanding hazard communications program (material safety data sheet and hazardous waste management program)
  - Systemic approach taken by the District Safety Committee noted as impressive
  - Special School District Safety Manual noted as an excellent document
  - Staff in our buildings held safety as a top priority in caring for both the children and the facility.



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### Concerns

- The Safety Committee has noted a concern that no one individual oversees the overall safety program for the entire District. Responsibilities are spread over several individuals resulting in inconsistencies and lack of direction.
- Although a reduction in the number of worker's compensation claims over the past 3 years has been noted, the issue remains an area of concern.
- Based on the Missouri Center for Safe Schools Safety Inspection, the following concerns were noted:
  - No uniform Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards checklist in place that buildings can use to ensure they are meeting the current MSIP standards in the areas of safety.
  - No standard district-wide comprehensive plan for crisis management and emergency preparedness is in place.
  - Policies that deal with safety, security, emergency preparedness and safe school legislation need to be reviewed and updated.
  - Building access control and lock down procedures need to be improved.

### Recommendations

- Explore the addition of a District Safety Manager to oversee the overall safety program for the entire District.
- Continue to reduce the number of worker compensation claims filed by District employees by using the Incident Review Committee which will report findings and make recommendations to the District Safety Committee.
- Based on concerns noted in the Safety Audit:
  - Develop a user-friendly MSIP checklist that will involve participation from all levels of the organization including teachers, school administrators' program directors, facilities personnel and outside agencies.
  - Review current crisis management plans and develop a district-wide comprehensive plan for crisis management and emergency preparedness.
  - Continue to review and update as needed policies that deal with safety, security, emergency preparedness and safe school legislation.
  - Develop a plan to improve building access control and lock down procedures at all sites.

Person responsible to champion action plan:

Larry Thompson, Director of Facilities and Operation, Special School District

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education: Annual

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation**