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Planning Team (2012-2013)
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Description of the Program
The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program for Special School District (SSD) provides early learning experiences for students ages 3 through 5 with IEPs and, in some locations, their typical peers in fourteen Saint Louis County partner districts. 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. Referral packets are initiated through these various programs or through our ECSE/First Steps/Transition Intake Coordinator. They follow the SSD procedure for joint review and if a packet is accepted it is assigned to one of the five early childhood diagnostic teams.

Description of How the Program's Services are Developed and Delivered
Early Childhood Special Education services are provided to all students who meet eligibility criteria for one of the disability categories put forth by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Services are provided in a variety of settings including:

- Itinerant in which the therapist travels to the child's preschool setting or the parent bring the child to the therapist at a set location,
- Early Childhood General Education in which the child's special education minutes are provided in a preschool classroom designed for typical early childhood (EC) students,
- Team Taught Classroom in which classroom is taught by one EC teacher and one ECSE teacher – the setting has more typical students than students with IEPs and is considered a general education setting,
- Reverse mainstream or integrated classroom in which the class is taught by an ECSE teacher but has both ECSE and EC students. The number of students with IEPs must be equal to or greater than the number of students without IEPs and the setting is considered special education,
- Early Childhood Special Education in which all students enrolled in the class have a current IEP.

Typically, ECSE classroom services are available for up to four half days where students are seen in either a morning or afternoon session. For students demonstrating intensive needs an intensive needs program is available to students four full days. In addition to ECSE services, the department provides related services in a variety of areas.

Key Program Stakeholder Groups
☒ Students
☒ Parents
☒ Staff
☒ Administrators

☐ Board of Education
☐ Taxpayers
☐ Other (Partner District EC Administrators

Student and/or Stakeholder Needs Addressed by the Program

The Early Childhood Special Education Department prepares students with IEPs for a successful transition into kindergarten and school age programming through comprehensive programming designed to address skill building in areas of developmental delay. The department works with other stakeholders including parents and partner district staff to ensure that skills developed within the ECSE program are carried over and maintained in other environments.

Overall Goals of the Program	Expected Measurable Outcomes
Goal 1: Develop and enhance quality educational/ instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals. (SSD CSIP Goal Area 1) Assure adherence to Special Education State Performance Plan (SPP) standards. (SSD CSIP 1.2.2)	1.1 Data from the ECSE Department's Early Childhood Outcome ratings (ECO) will show progress from pre- to post-testing in all domains. 1.2 There will be a positive correlation between students' Early Childhood Outcome exit scores and their 3rd grade MAP tests scores.
Goal 2: Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student, and community collaboration to meet the needs of all students. (SSD CSIP Goal Area 5) Address partner district requirements and priority areas for collaborative relationships. (SSD Strategy 5.2.1)	2.1 Survey of parents will indicate an improvement in the perception of communication over previous Program Eval data. 2.2 Survey of Partner District staff will indicate an improvement in perception of communication over previous Program Eval data. 2.3 Survey of SSD staff will indicate an improvement in perception of communication over previous survey data.

Evaluation Questions

- What is the status of the program's progress toward achieving the goals?
- What do students and other stakeholders consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- What do staff consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- How does the program's actual implementation compare with the program's design?
- How should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?
- How should goals be changed? Any added or removed?

Data Collection Methods

- ☒ Surveys and questionnaires
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Document reviews
- ☐ Observations
- ☒ Focus groups
- ☐ Case studies
- ☒ Assessments
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Evaluation Results

What is the status of the program's progress toward achieving the goals?

Goal 1: Develop and enhance quality educational / instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals. (SSD CSIP Goal Area 1) Assure adherence to Special Education State Performance Plan (SPP) standards. (SSD CSIP 1.2.2)

Measurable Objective 1:	1.1 Data from the ECSE Department's Early Childhood Outcome ratings (ECO) will show progress from pre to post testing in all domains.

Results: Met. Students made progress on all three indicators. 87.2% of 383 students made progress on at least one indicator.

Early Childhood Outcomes 5 point scale (N=383)		
Domain	Average improvement (1-5)	Percent of Students who improved.
Positive social emotional skills	.89	68.9%
Acquiring and using knowledge and skills	1.04	73.6%
Taking appropriate action to meet needs	.87	64.2%

Measurable Objective 2:	1.2 There will be a positive correlation between students' Early Childhood Outcome exit scores and their 3rd grade MAP tests scores.

Results: Met. Exit scores from ECSE 2008 were compared to MAP scale scores from the 3rd grade in 2012. All three domain scores were tested for correlation with MAP scores, but only indicator 2. *Acquiring and using knowledge and skills* were correlated to MAP scale scores. Indicator 2 exit scores from the ECSE program were positively correlated with 3rd grade Math scale scores at r= 0.345. Indicator 2 scores were positively correlated with 3rd grade Communication Arts scale scores at r = 0.502.

Correlation of 2008 MOSS Exit scores Indicator 2 to 3rd Grade MAP Scale Scores (Pearson's r*)		
Content Area	Correlation	Strength of relationship
Communication Arts	0.502	Strong
Mathematics	0.345	Moderate

This correlation of scores covering the time from participation in ECSE to 3rd grade state assessment scores validates the Early Childhood Outcomes assessment and gives further evidence of the importance of early childhood education on later school outcomes.

Goal 2: Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student, and community collaboration to meet the needs of all students. (SSD CSIP Goal Area 5) Address partner district requirements and priority areas for collaborative relationships. (SSD Strategy 5.2.1)

Measurable Objective 1:	2.1 Survey of parents will indicate an improvement in the perception of communication over previous Program Evaluation data.

Results: Met. The percent of parents indicating that communication was good improved from 91.5% to 93%.

Parent Comparison			
Year	Survey item	N	% Agree
2011	Do you feel you have good communication with your child's teachers and/or therapists?	165	91.50%
2013	I feel communication between home and school is: *poor, fair, good, very good, excellent.*	294	93%

Measurable Objective 2:	2.2 Survey of Partner District staff will indicate an improvement in perception of communication over previous Program Evaluation data.

Results: Not Met. The questions on the surveys in 2011 and 2013 did not match perfectly, but the indicator for good or adequate communication fell from 100% to 88%.

General Education Teacher Comparison			
Year	Survey item	N	% Agree
2011	Do you feel you have good communication with your student(s) ECSE teachers and/or therapists?	37	100.0%
2013	Do you feel that your communication (with SSD provider) is adequate?	48	88%

What do key staff and stakeholders consider to be the strengths and opportunities for improvement /weaknesses of the program?

Strengths
- Scores for all three Early Childhood Outcomes domains improved from entry to exit.
- There is a positive correlation between ECSE assessment of domain 2, *Acquiring and using knowledge and skills*, and 3rd grade MAP assessments.
- Over 90% of parents indicated that communication with SSD staff was good, and the percentage increased from 2011.

Opportunities/Weaknesses
- Items in surveys did not match exactly so precise comparison was difficult.
- Indicators of good communication between partner district teachers and SSD staff fell from 2011.

How well aligned are the program's priorities and processes with the goals of the program?

> The program's priorities and processes are well aligned with the goals of the program.

Deployment Level of Program Services: Services are well deployed, with no significant gaps.

Should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?   ☐ Yes ☒ No

Should goals be changed, added or removed?   ☐ Yes ☒ No

Evaluation Implications

<u>**General Recommendation Resulting from the Evaluation**</u>
Select from the following possible recommendations resulting from the evaluation:
☒ Continue the program as is. It is meeting or exceeding all expected outcomes.
☐ Expand the program, replicating effective components.
☐ Streamline, refine, or consolidate elements of the program.
☐ Redesign the program.
☐ Reevaluate the purpose and/or goals of the program.
☐ Discontinue ineffective or nonessential program components.
☐ Discontinue the program.
☐ Other (Specify.)

<u>**Action Plans**</u>

- Design future surveys with identical survey items for key comparisons over time.
- Address importance of communication with partner district teachers at department wide orientation.
- Area Coordinators will team with partner district administrators to explore possibilities for professional development for general education and special education teachers including such topics as:
  - o When to refer a student in the area of speech/language.
  - o How to run a constructivist classroom while individualizing learning.
  - o The use and benefits of behavior universals in Early Childhood classrooms
  - o Integrating academic content in Early Childhood classrooms.

<u>**Status of Previous Action Plans**</u>

1. *Consult with Saint Louis University to determine what needs to be done to increase reliability of the Developmental Curriculum Checklist (DCC). ECSE and Saint Louis University are in partnership regarding the efficacy of our supplemental literacy curriculum and outcome results as measured by the DCC.*

   Because of the EC Assessment Pilot and the move away from utilizing the DCC as a measure of student progress, the partnership with SLU for the increased reliability of the DCC was discontinued. The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) will be adopted by SSD for the

15-16 school year. Training on the DRDP is currently being conducted with Affton and Riverview Gardens being pilot districts for its implementation.

2. *Explore the Teaching Strategies Gold as a department measure in the event DESE receives the Federal Grant.*

   Missouri entered into an EC Assessment Pilot Project for the 12-13 school year looking to select an assessment to be used statewide. The state selected the Desired Results Developmental Profile as their measure. SSD plans to adopt this measure once it has been revised to allow us to measure progress with our early learners. In the meantime we are utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold in districts utilizing that measure and the DCC in all other districts.

3. *Train staff to include ideas for carrying on instructional strategies for parent in the home setting in their weekly communication. Remind staff to use lay terminology in all their communication with parents and give specific feedback regarding what and how the child is doing in the classroom.*

   Staff training is conducted by Area Coordinators, Effective Practice Specialists, teacher level and para level staff in terms of strategies that can be utilized by parents at home. Classroom teachers share this information through classroom newsletters, notes, emails, "Ready to Learn!" form and classroom bulletin boards.

4. *Add to ECSE Progress report a section to give parents suggestions for working with their child at home.*

   The ECSE parent conference form has been modified to "Ready to Learn!" which lists what the student has mastered and what the student is now ready to learn where teacher list activities to facilitate the development of skills the student is ready to learn.

Cost and Funding Source The costs are included in the budget.

*Operational Definitions

Pearson's r is a measure of the linear correlation between two variables and ranging from -1 to 1 where 1 is total positive correlation, 0 is no correlation at all, and -1 is total negative correlation.