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Program Description

Purpose or Mandate

The purpose of the Purchase of Service (POS) program is to provide intensive therapy, services, and academic instruction in a safe environment that is more therapeutic than is available in a public school setting. POS supports CSIP 1.1 (Ensure achievement for all students), PCF 5.2 (Plan and manage student and stakeholder relationships and engagement strategies), and PCF 13.8 (Design and implement alternative education and interventions).

Annual evaluations of POS are conducted per Board request. The most recent evaluation report was approved by the Board on 5/10/16.

Summary Description of the Program and What it is Expected to Accomplish

IEP teams determine the level of service a student requires to receive a free and appropriate public education. Special School District currently has contracts with six agencies approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide services in cases where the IEP team determines a student requires an intensive therapeutic program due to emotional needs, or a specialized program not offered in partner districts or in Special School District schools.

The program is expected to provide therapeutic interventions and instruction in social-emotional-behavioral skills so that students can develop competencies and ultimately experience success in a less restrictive environment.

Please consult the POS Program Description for a detailed review of this program’s characteristics and intended outcomes. The Program Description is available through the SSD Department of Evaluation and Research.

Summary of Goals and Objectives

Previous (2014-15) Cycle Goals and Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Students will progress academically. (POS-I)

Objective 1.1: STAR scores for Reading will improve from beginning of the year.

Objective 1.2: STAR scores for Math will improve from beginning of year.

Objective 1.3: 90% of students will have attendance of 90% or higher at each agency.

Objective 1.4: MAP Performance Index (MPI) will improve from year to year.

Goal 2: Describe the characteristics of students attending POS agencies. (POS-I)

Objective 2.1: Report the distribution of SSD students attending POS agencies by disability category.

Objective 2.2: Report the racial distribution of SSD students attending POS agencies.

Objective 2.3: Report the gender distribution of SSD students attending POS agencies.

Goal 3: Students will demonstrate progress on therapeutic measures. (POS-II)

Objective 3.1: CGAS¹ scores will improve for students over time.

Goal 4: Programs will show improvement on program quality indicators. (POS-II)

Objective 4.1: Agencies will meet DESE standard “Approaching” of 80% of students having 90% attendance.

Objective 4.2: Agencies will show improvement on self-assessment of program quality indicators rubric over time.

Goal 5: SSD will place students with appropriate consideration of student need and growing SSD capacity. (POS-II)

Objective 5.1: The number/proportion of students returning to a less restrictive environment (LRE) will increase over prior years.

Objective 5.2: The number/proportion of students enrolled in POS agencies over time will remain consistent or decrease.

Goal 6: POS placement decisions and trends will be equitable in nature. (POS-II)

Objective 6.1: Exploratory. Analyze and report trends in POS placements with respect to home partner district and type of placement immediately preceding POS referral (i.e., public special education placement vs. partner district placement).

Current (2015-16) Cycle Goals and Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Students will progress academically.

Objective 1.1: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in reading.

1.1 Measure: STAR Reading assessment fall to spring growth.

1.1 Target: 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.

Objective 1.2: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in math.

1.2 Measure: STAR Math assessment fall to spring growth.

1.2 Target: 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) growth.

Objective 2.1: Formal assessments of therapeutic outcomes will indicate improvements.

2.1 Measure (a): CGAS rating fall pre-test to spring post-test change.

2.1 Target (a): 90% improve or maintain.

2.1 Measure (b): CGAS ratings “level” change from fall to spring.

2.1 Target (b): 40% advancing one or more levels.

Objective 2.2: Agencies will meet DESE attendance standard of “Approaching.”

2.2 Measure: Proportion of students with 90% attendance or higher.

2.2 Target: 80%

Objective 2.3: Students graduating from a POS site will experience positive post-secondary outcomes.

2.3 Measure: Proportion of most recent year graduates whose 180-day follow-up outcomes meets the DESE criteria for positive placement.

2.3 Target: 51% (Missouri DESE SPP target for 2015-16)

Goal 3: Programs will show improvement on program quality indicators.

Objective 3.1: Agencies will show improvement on self-assessment of program quality indicators rubric over time.

3.1 Measure: Score(s) on self-assessment of program quality indicators rubric.

3.1 Target: Improvement over prior years’ self-assessment rating(s).

Goal 4: SSD will place students with appropriate consideration of student need and growing SSD capacity.

Objective 4.1: The number/proportion of students returning to a less restrictive environment (LRE) will increase.

4.1 Measure: Number and proportion of students who transition from a POS placement to a more inclusive placement.

4.1 Target: 20% of students who are enrolled at the beginning of a school year.

Objective 4.2: The number/proportion of students enrolled in POS agencies over time will remain consistent or decrease.

4.2 Measure: St. Louis County private/separate day facility rates as reported on the County-wide Special Education Profile.

4.2 Targets: (1) Maintain or decrease rate of private separate placements; (2) Maintain a rate of private separate placements that lies below the state-wide rate.

Objective 4.3: Students will receive high intensity SEB interventions in the referring school prior to their change of placement to POS.

4.3 Measure (a): The proportion of students enrolling in POS agencies from within St. Louis County over the course of the year who had a functional assessment derived behavior intervention plan prior to change of placement.

4.3 Target (a): 80%

4.3 Measure (b): The proportion of students enrolling in POS agencies from within St. Louis County over the course of the year who received social work services prior to change of placement.

4.3 Target (b): 80%

Current Cycle Action Plans

Short-term (within the next school year)

- Attendance monitoring and improvement. Continue to monitor individual student attendance and develop supports for student attendance. Continue to make attendance a priority in conversations with agencies.
- Explore additional avenues for collaboration and partnering with agencies to achieve goals such as maintaining students in the least restrictive environment and expanding short-term, intensive treatment options for students.
- Continue to pursue collaborative and programming efforts aimed at enhancing instruction and improving academic achievement among students.

Medium-term (1-2 years)

- Investigate alternative SEB outcome measures to the CGAS.
- Study and report on post-secondary outcomes for students who received services through POS.
- Share the components of standard based IEPs with agencies. Consider the appropriateness and use of standards-based IEP goals for program evaluation purposes.
- Explore sources of funding or collaboration to provide additional therapeutic staff in the public separate schools.

Long-term (3 years and more)

- None



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Evaluation Summary

Special School District (SSD) contracts with six agencies approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide services in cases where an IEP team determines a student requires an intensive therapeutic program due to emotional needs, or a specialized program not offered in partner districts or in SSD public separate schools. The purpose of the Purchase of Service (POS) program is to coordinate with private agencies to ensure attending students are provided intensive social-emotional-behavioral services and academic instruction in a safe and therapeutic environment.

Major Conclusions

- POS agencies continue to collaborate with SSD and each other for the purpose of improving programming.
- Over the previous semester, students made near expected growth in reading but less than expected growth in math. This finding mirrors past trends.
- Student within-year social-emotional gains as measured via the CGAS assessment were variable across agencies. Exploring alternate means of assessing student improvement in response to services provided through POS continues to be an action item.
- Overall attendance rates were fairly similar to those found in the previous POS evaluation but continue to lie well below the established target of the DESE “Approaching” standard. Attendance of students at Great Circle improved compared to same period over the prior year, while that for Logos declined.
- On the whole, agency self-ratings of program quality indicators continue to increase. Anecdotally, high level of staff turnover has been associated with decreases in quality ratings for some agencies.
- Twelve to thirteen students have transitioned from POS to a less restrictive setting each of the past three years. Action plans were developed with a focus on increasing the frequency of such transitions.
- POS enrollment has remained relatively stable over five years. The private separate placement rate for St. Louis County (0.4%) lies below that for the state overall (0.8%).
- A significant proportion of newly enrolled students over two years had no behavior intervention plan documented in their IEP prior to change of placement to POS from another St. Louis County school. Most students were receiving some form of social work services (though often consult rather than direct) prior to change of placement.

Program Description

Purpose or Mandate

The purpose of the Purchase of Service (POS) program is to coordinate with private agencies to ensure attending students are provided intensive social-emotional-behavioral services and academic instruction in a safe and therapeutic environment.

POS supports the following CSIP goals and Process Classification Framework (PCF) elements:

CSIP 1.1 Ensure achievement for all students

PCF 5.2 Plan and manage student and stakeholder relationships and engagement strategies

PCF 13.8 Design and implement alternative education and interventions

An annual evaluation of this program is required under Board Policy IM. The last evaluation report was approved by the Board on 5/10/16.

What this program does

Special School District (SSD) currently has contracts with six agencies approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide services in cases where an IEP team determines a student requires an intensive therapeutic program due to emotional needs, or a specialized program not offered in partner districts or in SSD public separate schools. The POS program manages student transitions into and out of private separate placements and coordinates with agencies to ensure students in these placements receive high quality services.

The agencies themselves provide therapeutic interventions and instruction in social-emotional-behavioral skills so that students can develop competencies and ultimately experience success in a less restrictive environment.

How this program works

Services from POS are initiated when an IEP team has determined that the school is unable to meet the needs of a student in a less restrictive environment utilizing all services, supports, and accommodations available to the team. The IEP team is responsible for determining the level of service a student requires to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Teams in partner districts may refer a student to a separate public school or a separate private school when the student has failed to demonstrate progress despite provision of the highest intensity of services, supports, and accommodations available in the current setting. Separate public schools may also refer a student to a separate private placement when progress is less than expected despite all intervention options in that setting having been exhausted. Parents may also request an IEP meeting to consider a more restrictive level of service, including a separate private placement.

Following a change of placement to a separate private placement, a student completes an intake and orientation process involving assessment of functioning, interviews, and goal setting. Therapeutic services and coping skill-building involve achieving “buy-in” from students and families. Students attending separate private schools receive both academic instruction and social-emotional-behavioral programming. SSD staff and agencies collaborate to monitor students’ progress. If sufficient progress is made in improving behavior and overcoming barriers that led to placement in the private separate setting, then SSD staff coordinate with the agency and the family to develop a plan for the student to return to a less restrictive environment, which may include a separate public school or the student’s partner district/home school.

What customers/stakeholders expect

Students are entitled to receive FAPE. Stakeholders expect that some students, in order to be successful, may require an educational environment that provides therapeutic services and instruction in social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) skills. Stakeholders also expect that POS staff will collaborate closely with agencies to promote conditions and practices that lead to positive student outcomes. Families desire therapeutic or autism programming that leads to positive school outcomes for their students.

What were the major accomplishments or benefits of this program?

Students attending POS agencies receive intensive therapeutic supports. Students have been afforded increased academic instruction time as a result of reduced periods of suspension. Agencies have been offered the opportunity

to participate in training provided through SSD on topics such as transition and standards-based IEPs. POS has helped strengthen future planning at all agencies by bringing in a facilitator or effective practice specialist to model and train agency staff. The Community Transition Team (CTT) developed by the SSD transition department was shared so that agencies can have conversations with families regarding skills students will need to possess for post-secondary opportunities. SSD and agencies have continued to develop strong partnerships. Due to the strong partnerships developed, agencies not only continue to work closely with SSD, but have also increased collaboration with one other. This has created an open conversation of sharing ideas and strategies, which benefits students.

How well did this program fulfill its purpose or mandate?

Inadequate Approaching Satisfactory Satisfactory Excellent

What factors made essential contributions (+/-) to this rating?

Agencies continue to monitor attendance, which represents an obstacle for many students due to mental health challenges. Attendance is an ongoing agenda topic during POS/Agency meetings, and we continue to problem solve around solutions for increasing attendance. SSD and agencies continue to collaborate to increase the quality of academic instruction provided to students. Broader participation in STAR testing among students provides an indicator of academic growth along with data to inform instructional programming and planning decisions. Two of the agencies, Great Circle and Logos, have purchased the STAR testing program to utilize with all students in their programs.

What is the general level of customer or stakeholder satisfaction with this program?

Not at all Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Completely Satisfied

What factors made essential contributions (+/-) to this rating?

Parents report favorable relationships with agencies, and frequently during meetings cite that their children are making progress as evidenced by fewer removals from school and disciplinary phone calls home. Agency directors report appreciating the opportunity to participate in trainings offered by SSD. Agency directors also report open and timely communication with SSD. Regular meetings between agencies and SSD staff have served to enhance collaboration and clarify expectations. Agencies continue to express the need for continuing regular meetings. Such meetings provide individual agencies the opportunity to clarify expectations and collaborate. Agencies now reach out to one another for information, support, etc.

Evaluation Results

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

Goal 1: Students will progress academically.

Measurable Objective 1.1: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in reading.

Measurable Objective 1.2: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in math.

Results: Attainment of this objective was assessed by student performance on the STAR reading and math assessments. The STAR is a benchmark assessment administered three times per year. Targets of 50% of students demonstrating the equivalent of one year of moderate growth or more (i.e., progress equivalent to the median national growth rate for the 25th percentile) were established.¹ Since the analysis examined change in performance between the fall and winter assessment, targets were based on expected growth over one half year.

There is no definitive way to approximate "one year of academic growth." Thus several metrics/score types provided by the STAR were examined: (1) Standard score change in relation to moderate growth expectations by

grade for students beginning at the 25th percentile; (2) Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) change exceeding zero; and (3) Instructional Reading Level (IRL) change of 1 year or more (applies to reading only).²

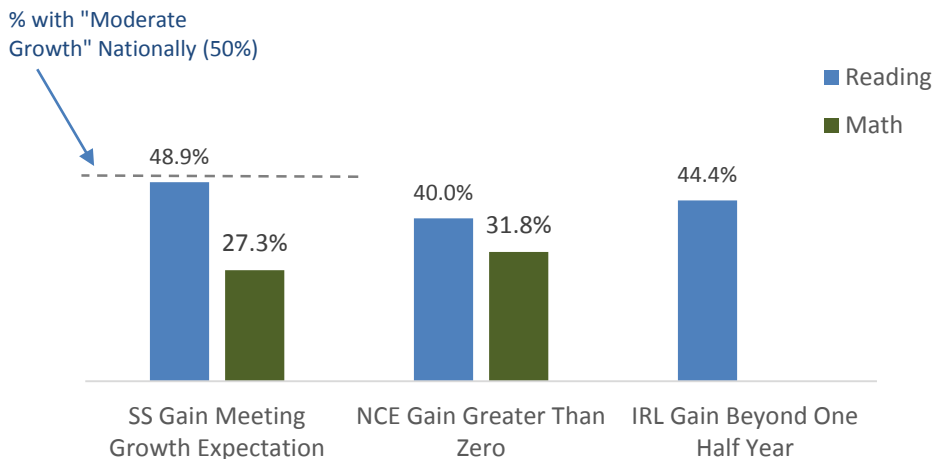
Results are displayed below. Reading results are based on the score pairs of 45 students and math results on the score pairs of 44 students. Those without scores in each benchmark period were excluded. Around 80% of students whose scores were included were enrolled in grade seven or above. Students with fall benchmark scores exceeding the 75th percentile rank were excluded, based on the logic that students with an initially high level of performance would be expected to make less sizable gains across the year (this parallels methodology used in a recent analysis of STAR performance for SSD separate schools, data from which is used as a comparison and reported below). This resulted in the exclusion of 5 students' scores for reading and 2 students' scores for math.

Students met growth expectations in reading at a higher proportion than was the case for math. **48.9%** of students met the moderate half-year growth expectation for reading. This rate falls just below the national rate (50%) for students achieving moderate growth based on their fall performance. In comparison, a recent analysis found that a lesser proportion (43%) of SSD separate public school and career technical school students achieved the median growth rate over the most recent *entire* school year (though note that this group analyzed included a much higher percentage of younger students). With respect to an increase in normative rank as indicated by NCE change, **40%** of students demonstrated an NCE improvement in reading; this means that 40% of students improved their normative position relative to same-grade peers in reading between the first and second benchmark. In the aforementioned analysis of SSD school students overall, 44.2% exhibited positive NCE change over the entire year. **44.4%** of POS students demonstrated a half year's gain in IRL (vs. 28.9% in the comparison analysis over an entire year). On average, POS students included in the analysis gained 24.2 scaled score points and 1.24 NCE points from the first to second benchmark.

Only **27.3%** of students included in the analysis met the scaled score half-year growth expectation in math. In contrast, 43% of students SSD district-wide met the *full*-year math growth expectation last school year. **31.8%** of students demonstrated an NCE improvement in math from fall to winter; the district-wide full-year comparison was 54.3%. On average, POS students included in the analysis gained 2.6 scaled score points and -0.23 NCE points (i.e., in the aggregate NCE scores decreased slightly) from the first to second benchmark.³

In summary, these data indicate that POS students, over one benchmark window, made reasonable gains in reading but less than expected gains in math. These STAR results are comparable to the results reported in a prior (December 2015) POS evaluation, which also found that that student growth in math over the first half of the year was both limited and less pronounced than in reading.

Proportion of Students Demonstrating Growth in Reading and Math: 3 STAR Score Targets



Goal 2: Students will demonstrate social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) growth.

Measurable Objective 2.1: Formal assessments of therapeutic outcomes will indicate improvements.

Results: The Children’s Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) is a social-emotional assessment used by clinicians to provide a global measure functioning in children and adolescents. More detailed information regarding the CGAS can be found in **Appendix C**. CGAS ratings are conducted early in the fall first semester (or at the time of enrollment for students who enroll mid-year), and early second semester, typically in February, though agencies have been somewhat inconsistent in the timing of conducting these ratings.

CGAS results for the current and prior school years can be referenced in the table below. Only students with a fall and spring rating were included. The targets set for this objective were (1) 90% of students improving or maintaining from the fall to spring rating, and (2) 40% of students advancing a CGAS “level” pre to post assessment.

Overall, **89.9%** of POS students assessed had a spring rating that equaled or exceeded their fall rating, essentially meeting the established target of 90%. This is comparable to the result from 2016 (90.9%). A smaller proportion of students than in the prior year were rated to have shown any improvement (i.e., an increase of at least one point) at all, however (46.4% this year vs. 77.3% last year). The second rating of the year resulted in a CGAS level change for **29%** of students, which falls below the established target of 40% but is comparable to the prior year result of 31.8%. Though comparing CGAS rating results across individual POS agencies, as well as year-to-year for an individual agency, carries cautions and limitations, notably several agencies experienced a decrease this school year in the percentage of students rated to have demonstrated SEB improvements based upon the CGAS outcomes.

CGAS pre-post change

School	School Year	% With Rating Increase	% With No Change	% With Rating Decrease	Average Rating Change	% With 1+ Level Increase	% With No Level Change	% With 1+ Level Decrease	Total Students Rated
ECH	16-17	25.0% (2)	37.5% (3)	37.5% (3)	-0.88	12.5% (1)	62.5% (5)	25.0% (2)	8
	15-16	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.78	33.3% (3)	66.7% (0)	0.0% (0)	9
Great Circle	16-17	39.0% (11)	65.8% (25)	5.3% (2)	0.87	15.8% (6)	79.0% (30)	5.3% (2)	38
	15-16	61.8% (21)	20.6% (7)	17.6% (6)	1.50	20.6% (7)	64.7% (22)	14.7% (5)	34
Logos	16-17	83.3% (15)	5.6% (1)	11.1% (2)	7.67	55.6% (10)	33.3% (6)	11.1% (2)	18
	15-16	100.0% (19)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.68	47.4% (9)	52.6% (10)	0.0% (0)	19
Marygrove	16-17	80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.00	60.0% (3)	40.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	5
	15-16	75.0% (3)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	11.75	50.0% (2)	50.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	4
Total POS	16-17	46.4% (32)	43.5% (30)	10.1% (7)	2.52	29.0% (20)	62.3% (43)	8.7% (6)	69
	15-16	77.3% (51)	13.6% (9)	9.1% (6)	4.08	31.8% (21)	60.6% (40)	7.6% (5)	66

Measurable Objective 2.2: Agencies will meet DESE attendance standard of “Approaching.”

Results: DESE employs a proportional attendance formula for accountability/reporting purposes. This metric weights the attendance of individual students based on the proportion of time they are enrolled at a school. The target set for this objective was the MSIP “Approaching” standard, or a proportional 90 attendance percentage equal to or exceeding 80%.

The overall POS weighted 90% or higher proportional attendance was **64.2%** over fall semester 2016. This falls slightly below the rate for fall semester of the 2015-16 school year (68.8%) but above that for the entire 2014-15 school year (55.3%).⁴ Additional attendance data, including attendance by school, are provided in the table below.

Among agencies with student placements exceeding three, Marygrove had the highest proportional 90 attendance, followed by Great Circle, Logos, and ECH. Student attendance at Great Circle has improved when compared to the same period the prior year, whereas measures of aggregate attendance for Logos and Marygrove have experienced a decline in comparison to fall 2015.

Attendance Results

Agency	Students Fall 2016	Weighted ≥ 90% Fall 2016-17	Weighted ≥ 90% Fall 2015-16	Avg. Daily Attendance Fall 2016-17	Avg. Daily Attendance Fall 2015-16	Median Daily Attendance Fall 2016-17	Median Daily Attendance Fall 2015-16
Center for Autism	3	100.0%	100.0%	95.9%	97.5%	94.6%	97.7%
Every Child's Hope	23	51.9%	49.9%	86.8%	85.8%	91.9%	88.4%
Giant Steps	1	100.0%	79.4%	97.1%	94.3%	97.1%	97.2%
Great Circle	45	67.7%	58.6%	90.9%	88.8%	92.9%	92.5%
Logos	23	57.7%	88.0%	87.0%	93.0%	90.9%	94.1%
Marygrove	8	81.6%	100.0%	89.1%	96.5%	94.8%	96.6%
Totals	103*	64.2%	68.8%	89.3%	90.3%	92.8%	92.8%

*Three students attended more than one POS agency in fall 2016.

As a source of comparison, the weighted 90% proportional attendance rates at individual SSD separate public schools over first semester of 2016-17 were as follows: Ackerman 82.8%; Hiram Neuwoehner 83.0%; Litzsinger 70.3%; Northview 67.5%; Southview Elementary 72.8%; Southview High 76.7%.

Measurable Objective 2.3: Students graduating from a POS site will experience positive post-secondary outcomes.

Results: 180-day follow up status was obtained for all 7 students who were attending a POS agency at time of exit (graduation or dropout) during the 2015-16 school year. Of the 7 students, 2 (28.6%) reported outcomes that achieved the state's special education "met" criteria (i.e., employed 20 hours per week and for 90 days or completing post-secondary education/training). Thirteen students exited POS by graduation or dropout in school year 2014-15, and of these, status was obtained for nine. Of the nine, five (55.6%) reported 180 day outcomes that met the DESE special education standard.

Goal 3: Programs will show improvement on program quality indicators.

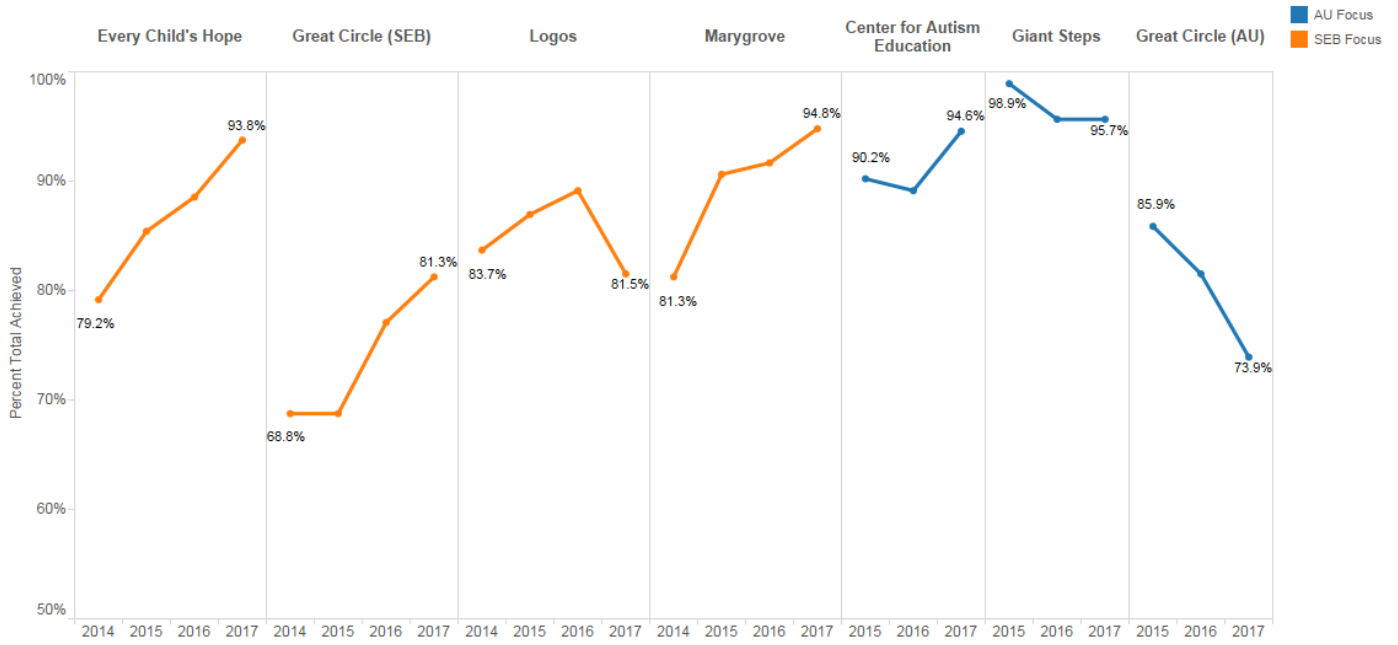
Measurable Objective 3.1: Agencies will show improvement on self-assessment of program quality indicators rubric over time.

Results: Once per year, agencies self-rate components of implementation and service quality using rubrics adapted by SSD. There are two separate rubrics, one used by agencies with a social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) focus and the other used by agencies with an autism (AU) focus. Agencies and POS staff complete the Quality Indicator ratings in January and February.

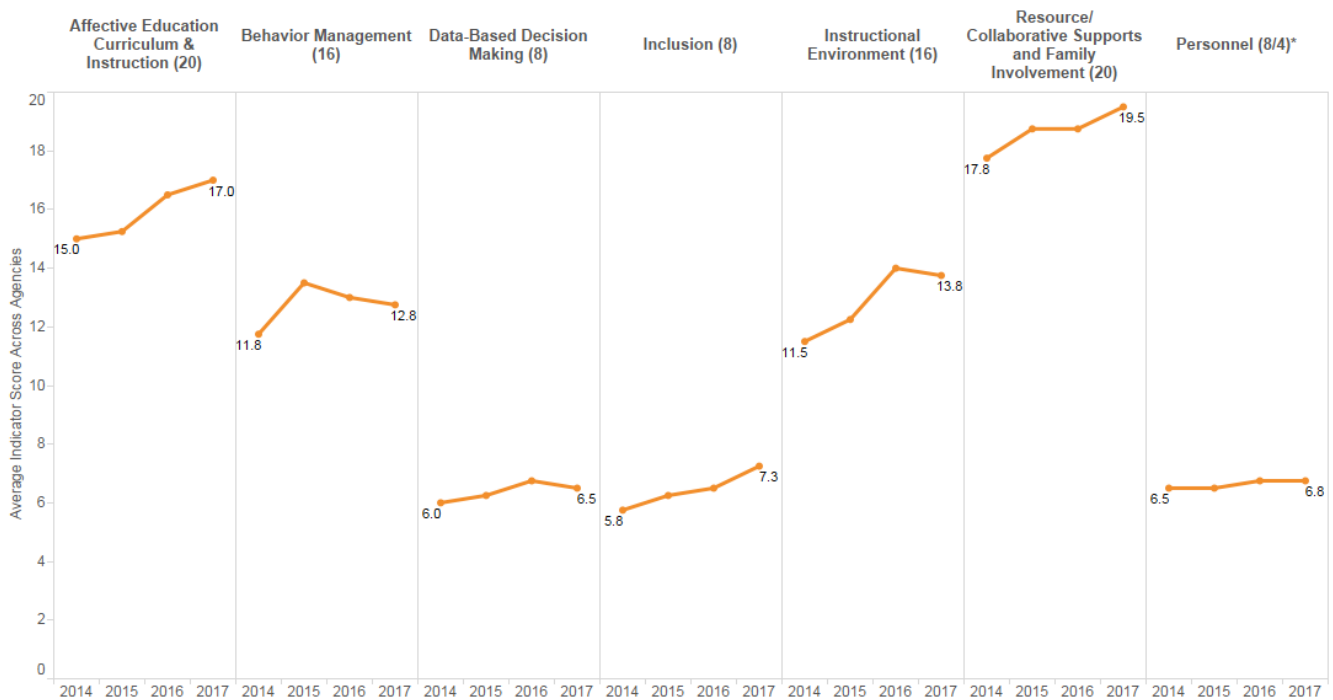
The target for this objective was that all POS agencies improve over the prior year's rating. Percentage of Quality Indicator points received over several years by each agency currently contracting with SSD are shown in the figures that follow. Generally ratings continue to increase among agencies with a Social-Emotional-Behavior (SEB) focus (represented by orange trend lines in the figure). Rating trends for agencies with an autism focus (represented by blue trend lines in the figure) have been variable. Significant staff turnover in the autism program at Great Circle may have influenced the cross-year difference in that agency's rating.

Based on where scores for the individual Quality Indicators fall in reference to the maximum score possible (as pictured in the latter two figures below), agency SEB programs might continue to focus on improvement in the areas of Affective Education Curriculum and Instruction, Behavior Management, and Instructional Environment. AU programs ratings indicate room for improvement in the areas of Inclusion and Instructional Methods, Activities, and Environment. Improvements initiated by POS agencies in conjunction with the quality indicators self-rating also appear in a table below.

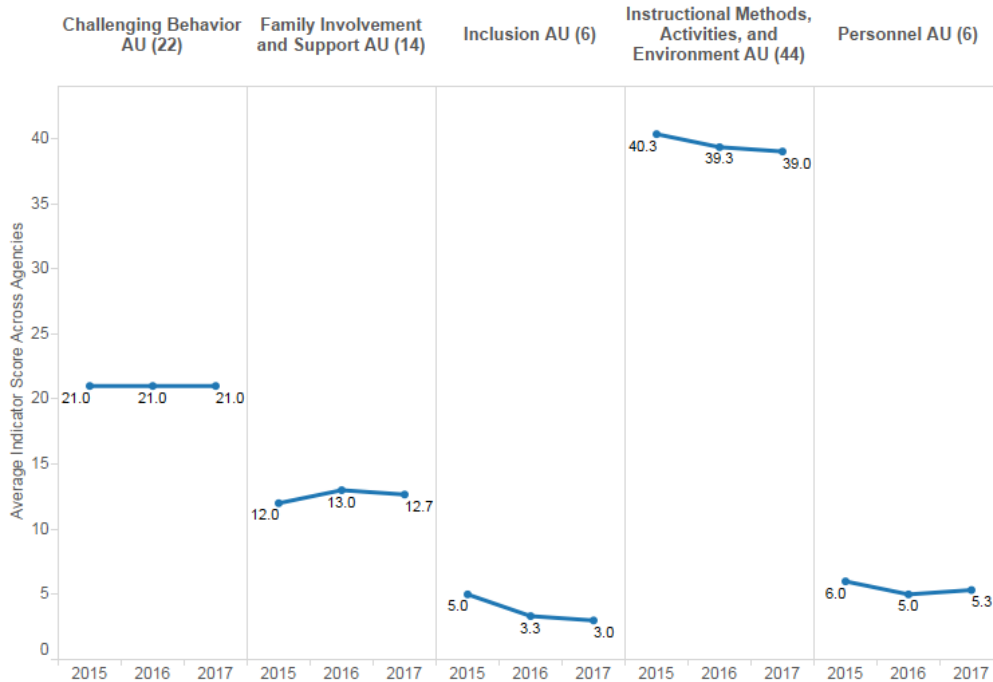
**Percent of Quality Indicators Met Overall
POS Agencies, 2014-2017**



**Individual Quality Indicator Change
Average Among Agencies With an SEB Focus**



**Individual Quality Indicator Change
Average Among Agencies With an Autism Focus**



Improvements initiated by POS Agencies in conjunction with quality self-evaluation

Agency	Improvements
Logos	<p>2016-17 Update: Logos has decreased in some areas on the self-assessment. The decrease is thought to be as a result of new staff that have not been as proficient in implementing universals, delivering instruction with fidelity, or using and collecting data. Logos reviews Missouri GLEs and updates curriculum guide regularly. In the 2016-17 academic year a self-study curriculum committee is charged with self-evaluating the entire curriculum. The agency continues to fine tune their formalized transition plans to move students to LRE. They offer dedicated therapeutic room in the school, staffed by a licensed therapist dedicated for de-escalation. Logos continually evaluates and update sensory and visual support in all classroom & therapy rooms</p> <p>2015-16 Update: Logos continues to build upon previous work. The transitional services position is now full time and is working with the SSD transition department to develop long term transitional planning for all students at Logos. Additionally, the agency reviewed and updated both Science and English curriculums. Science will have a STEM focus and English will have a hands-on focus. Therapists are implementing dialectical behavior therapy (DBT).</p>
Marygrove	<p>2016-17 Update: Improvements include posting of strategies and “cool down” sheets. Day students benefit from the respite and emergency therapy provide by a Marygrove therapist. The agency is connected with United Way 211 which provides links for families with agencies. Therapists provide resources to families such as food, utility resources, etc. Small classroom size allows for environment adaptation to meet individual student needs.</p> <p>2015-16 Update: Marygrove continues to implement and enhance behavior planning, implementation of the Strong Kids social-emotional learning curriculum, and recreational activities with non-disabled students. Additionally, the agency is actively researching ways to adapt curriculum that better meets the needs of their high school students. Trauma-based therapy/techniques are being incorporated into classroom instruction.</p>

Every Child's Hope	<p>2016-17 Update: Improvements noted are bulleted below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A+ Curriculum • Read 180 • Time to Teach pilot program (2 classes) • Therapeutic assessment • In the beginning stages of offering support groups to parents. • Added a transition classroom. • Added pilot for middle school. Teachers integrate lesson into the curriculum that builds a structure on a student's strength. Data is being collected to see if it is successful. • Continue to bring in outside presenters on a variety of topics. • Family engagement has become a priority. • Beginning to link families with support in the community. <p>2015-16 Update: ECH is focused on developing and strengthening teacher skills through professional development, utilizing SSD trainings when appropriate. Therapists are being trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. This is a trauma informed treatment that has been empirically proven to relieve symptoms in trauma clients.</p>
Great Circle	<p>2016-2017 Update: Transition plans have been created and staff are being trained in how to better support transition. Have developed a "comfort room" with comfort plans to support students therapeutically. Have Toolboxes in classrooms to utilize for de-escalation. Great circle has implemented a Mentor/Mentee program. Staff have undergone Kagan training in "Win-Win" discipline. They have also studied instructional strategies/approaches from the book, "Teach Like a Champion." The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics in being integrated into their approach. With respect to the autism-focused program, staff and training of new staff likely caused the overall quality indicator scores to decrease.</p> <p>2015-16 Update: Great Circle continues to put an emphasis on curriculum. With support from SSD, they have trained staff in the Corrective Reading intervention program, and investigated and selected Number Worlds to support the math curriculum. A standards-based report card has been developed and will be implemented in the fall of 2016. Additionally, the report card will connect school to work requirements for students 16 years of age and older. In the fall, all teachers will take part in Kagan Skills training (high-yield instructional strategies). To support procedures and processes, the following have been implemented: Attendance procedures which include incentives, four-year plans for 9th-12th grade students, building leadership teams, building improvement teams, a PBIS team, data binders, and increased technology (laptop carts).</p>
Giant Steps	<p>2016-17 Update: None</p> <p>2015-16 Update: Giant Steps expanded their vocation program to serve more students and get more students working out in the community. They developed a Giant Steps Transition Checklist to match students' level of performance and improve transition services. New trainings for all staff on mandatory reporting and epilepsy/seizures has been provided.</p>
Center for Autism	<p>No additional qualitative information has been submitted with the Quality Indicator self-reports provided by the Center for Autism.</p>

Goal 4: SSD will place students with appropriate consideration of student need and growing SSD capacity.

Measurable Objective 4.1: The number/proportion of students returning to a less restrictive environment (LRE) will increase.

Results: Including those students who finished the 2015-16 school year enrolled in POS but began the current year at a less restrictive setting, 12 students have transitioned to a less restrictive setting over the course of the 2015-16 school year through February 2017 (8 of these transitions were to SSD separate public schools). This number is projected to fall below the established target of 20% of POS enrolled students transitioning to LRE annually. Per the previous POS evaluation, 13 students had changes of placement to a less restrictive setting over the course of the 2015-16 school year (through April), while the 2014-15 total was 12.

For the purpose of this analysis, less restrictive settings included SSD special education schools, St. Louis County partner district schools, and public schools outside of St. Louis County. Partial day transitions were also considered to be a less restrictive placement.

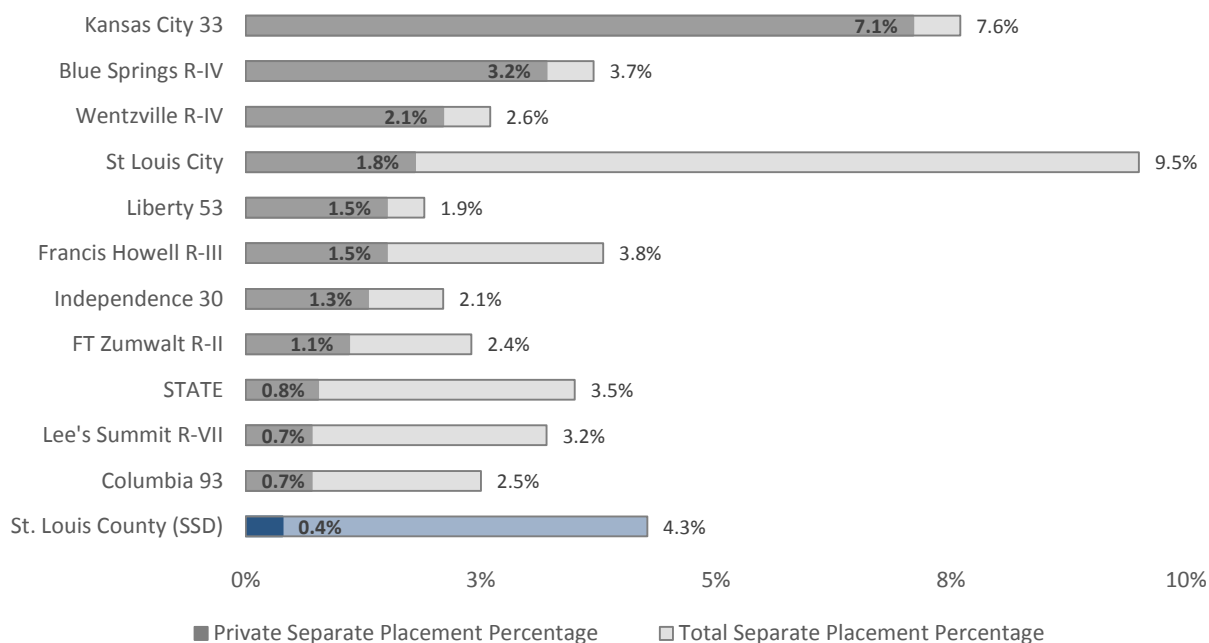
Measurable Objective 4.2: The number/proportion of students enrolled in POS agencies over time will remain consistent or decrease.

Results: The target for this objective is to maintain a reported rate of private separate placement that lies below the state-wide rate, while also maintaining or decreasing the count of SSD students that are served through private school placements in general.

100 students attended purchase of service at any point over fall semester 2016 (110 had attended through February). Per the previous POS report, 115 students attended POS at any point in 2015-16 (through April), and 111 students attended POS at any point over the course of the 2014-15 school year. Anecdotally, it has been observed that a sizable proportion of students enrolling in POS this school year have been transfers from outside of St. Louis County. These students often transfer from a purchase of service in another area, or alternately have been placed on homebound.

The target for this objective was met. The figure below displays total separate placement and private separate placement rates as reported for the 2015-16 school year for St. Louis County, the state, and several other select districts whose data was publically available. The source of the data is the Special Education Profiles; DESE obscures separate placement data for many districts due to small counts of students in these placements. SSD's private separate placement rate of **0.4%** lies below the state-wide rate of 0.8%, and also below that of Missouri comparison districts. The St. Louis County *total* separate placement rate of 4.3% exceeds that state-wide (3.5%), as well as that of the majority of comparison districts included in the figure below.

Private Separate and Total Separate Placements 2016



Source: Missouri DESE Special Education Profiles.

Measurable Objective 4.3: Students will receive high intensity SEB interventions in the referring school prior to their change of placement to POS.

Results: It is generally an expectation that students who experience social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) concerns are provided behavioral intervention of increasing intensity before being considered for more restrictive placements. SSD provides training and coaching in SEB programming and supports to school-based staff that, among other expected impacts, is intended to contribute to service delivery that allows students with SEB concerns to experience success in general education/less restrictive settings. Evidence of functional assessment driven behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and/or social work services prior to change of placement to POS provides indication that school teams have implemented SEB interventions of some intensity prior to considering change of placement. The initial target set for BIPs and the presence of social work minutes prior to change of placement to POS was 80%. Only students who transferred from a St. Louis County school, including SSD public separate schools, were included in the analysis.

Thus far in 2016-17, the IEPs of **37.5%** (6/16) of students who have had a change of placement to POS have contained BIPs. **81.3%** (13/16) of IEPs included social work minutes (one student that did not was on homebound, and thus social work minutes would be unavailable). Over half of those who had social work minutes received “consult,” rather than “direct,” minutes. The 2015-16 rates were 55.6% (10/18) for BIPs and 88.9% (16/18) for social work. Thus the 80% target was met for social work but not met for BIPs. Data was also compiled on the presence of SEB-related goals and SEB-related accommodations in IEPs. 100% of the IEPs of students with a change of placement to POS in 2016-17 contained specific SEB goals, while 87.5% contained SEB accommodations.

Though it is possible that intensive SEB interventions are being provided by the sending school preceding a transition to POS in absence of BIPs and/or social work service minutes (this is more likely in the case of a student moving to POS from a SSD separate school), the results here suggest that schools are commonly initiating changes of placement without having implemented (or at least documented) the full spectrum of best-practice behavioral strategies available to teams and that SSD has programming in place to support.

Evaluation Results Summary

Strengths and opportunities for improvement

Strengths:

1. On average, students made expected gains in reading.
2. Students at Logos and Marygrove were rated by that agency's staff to have made noticeable SEB gains in the short term based on CGAS ratings.
3. The attendance of students at Great Circle has improved in comparison to the 2015-16 school year.
4. Overall, agencies continue to implement programming and practices that have led to higher self-ratings of program quality.
5. POS enrollment has remained relatively consistent over multiple years. At present the private separate placement rate for SSD is half of that state-wide.
6. A high proportion of students were found to be receiving SSD social work services prior to a change of placement to POS (though often these came in the form of "consult" minutes).
7. Agencies continue to partake in SSD trainings to improve programming.
8. Agencies utilize self-assessments of quality indicators to make improvements in programing.
9. Agencies continue to grow and develop collaboration with each other through agency meetings.

Opportunities/Weaknesses:

1. On average, students made less than expected gains in math.
2. Per CGAS ratings, in some cases students are perceived as making minimal or no SEB gains in the short term.
3. Overall student attendance at POS agencies remains below established targets. Attendance rates for students at Logos were lower this fall in comparison to the same period in 2015-16.
4. The program quality self-ratings for one agency (Great Circle) decreased following a period of staffing turnover.
5. While a positive that 12 students transitioned back to partner district schools or SSD separate schools thus far this school year, it remains the case that such transitions to a less restrictive setting occur relatively infrequently for students who have attend POS.
6. A significant proportion of students transferring to POS from within the county lack behavior intervention plans prior to change of placement to the more restrictive placement.
7. A alternative method of evaluating improvement in student mental health (than the CGAS) has yet to be identified.
8. Rigor in academics, while increasing, still needs to remain a focus for agencies.

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

The program's processes are well aligned to the goals of the program.

Deployment Level of Program Services

- Little or no deployment of program services.
- The program services are in the early stages of deployment in most areas or schools.
- Services are deployed, although some areas or schools are in early stages of deployment.
- Services are well deployed, although deployment may vary in some areas or schools.
- Services are well deployed, with no significant gaps.
- Services are fully deployed, without significant weaknesses or gaps in any areas or schools.

Should resources be changed to improve this program?

Yes No

If Yes, describe changes.

Should goals be changed, added or removed?

Yes No

If Yes, describe changes.

Evaluation Implications

What are the costs of this program?

Fiscal Year 2015-16 Expenditures:

Salary and Benefits: 180,113.30
Agency Reimbursement : 2,143,018.78
Total Costs: 2,323,132.08

Reimbursement across Individual Agencies

Agency	2015-16 Reimbursement	2016-17 Reimbursement Through January 2017
Center for Autism Education	186,287.83	111,300.00
Every Child's Hope	301,295.15	175,091.22
Giant Steps	93,947.57	26,686.86
Great Circle	938,507.01	359,168.16
Logos School	526,590.65	238,753.56
Marygrove	96,390.57	47,782.36
Total	2,143,018.78	958,782.16

Upon referral to the POS agencies, funding is required to purchase services. SSD staff dedicated to the POS program include one full-time administrator, one full-time teacher, and a 0.5 (half-time) secretary.

What are the major sources and amounts of Funds?

General revenue/SSD Budget

How many customers (students) are served by this program?

81.34 full-time equivalent students in fiscal year 2016

What is this program's annual cost per customer?

\$28,560.09 for fiscal year 2016

Estimated Cost Effectiveness

- Mandated program; costs cannot be significantly reduced.
- Mandated program; costs could be reduced (include in Action Plan, below).
- Benefits greatly outweigh costs.
- Benefits outweigh cost, but improvement appears possible (include in Action Plans, below).
- Costs outweigh benefits (include in Action Plan, below).

Explanation

POS agencies allow for the full continuum of placement options for SSD students. Enrollment of SSD students in POS agencies has leveled following steady reductions between the years 2007 and 2012. Though costly to SSD, data

suggest that students generally benefit from the placements, and informally, customer satisfaction with the program is high.

General Recommendation Resulting from this Evaluation

- Continue the program as is. It is meeting or exceeding all expected outcomes.
- Continue the program with specific action plans for improvement.
- 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.

Review of Previous Action Plans

Action Plan 1	Attendance monitoring and improvement. Continue to monitor individual student attendance and develop supports for student attendance. Continue to make attendance a priority in conversations with agencies. (Short-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 1	Attendance continues to be a priority. Attendance is discussed at all agency meetings. Agencies have implement strategies of calling home to check on student status when a pattern of absences has occurred. While many of the agencies deal with students who have acute mental health needs, it is no longer an automatic that the student is just taking a “mental health” day. Rather, agencies are working with students to develop strategies to remain in school while dealing with mental health issues.
Action Plan 2	Explore additional avenues for collaboration and partnering with agencies to achieve goals such as maintaining students in the least restrictive environment and expanding short-term, intensive treatment options for students. (Short-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 2	The purchase of service coordinator has meet with agencies to begin developing a framework for returning students to a least restrictive environment. This plan is still in the development stage. The discussion has focused on the individual needs of students/families while developing criteria to move to a least restrictive environment.
Action Plan 3	Continue to pursue collaborative and programming efforts aimed at enhancing instruction and improving academic achievement among students. (Short-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 3	Agencies are provided opportunities to participate in trainings offered by SSD. See other improvements and initiatives noted in sections above.
Action Plan 4	Investigate alternative SEB outcome measures to the CGAS. (Medium-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 4	Conversations with the SEB effective practice specialists regarding potential measures for students continue. Literature reviews of possible measurement tools are in process. To date, an alternative measure has yet to be chosen.

Action Plan 5	Study and report on post-secondary outcomes for students who received services through POS. (Medium-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 5	Post-secondary outcomes for students in POS have been collected and appear in this report.
Action Plan 6	Share the components of standards based IEPs with agencies. Consider the appropriateness and use of standards-based IEP goals for program evaluation purposes. (Medium-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 6	The purchase of Service teacher will attend trainings so that she can share components of standards based IEPs with the agencies.
Action Plan 7	Explore sources of funding or collaboration to provide additional therapeutic staff in the public separate schools. (Medium-term plan)
Status of Action Plan 7	Explored opportunities with Logos. At this time this is not a viable option. Public separate schools are looking at opportunities to provide additional social work to support therapeutic needs.

Forward Planning

What specific actions are needed in the next evaluation cycle?

Short-term (within the next school year)

1. In collaboration with agencies, a framework will be developed for teams to consider and plan for a return to a less restrictive environment. Some preliminary work on this has already been completed. (Objective 4.1; OFI 5)

Anticipated Date of Completion: December 2017

2. The Purchase of Service teacher will attend standards based IEP training. (Goals 1 and 2; OFI 1 and 2)

Anticipated Date of Completion: December 2017

Medium-term (1-2 years)

3. Continue to investigate alternative SEB outcome measures to the CGAS. If more appropriate assessment methods are identified, coordinate with agencies to develop a plan for adoption and use. (Objective 2.1; OFI 2)

Anticipated Date of Completion: 2018-19 school year

4. Increase attendance of partner district staff at IEP meetings. (No directly associated Objective or OFI)

Anticipated Date of Completion: 2018-19 school year

5. Share the components of standards based IEPs with agencies. Consider the appropriateness and use of standards-based IEP goals for program evaluation purposes. (Goals 1 and 2; OFI 1, 2, 3, and 5)

Anticipated Date of Completion: 2018-19 school year

Long-term (3 years and more)

None

What are future goals, objectives, measures, and targets that will be used to monitor and evaluate this program?

Goal 1: Students will progress academically.

Objective 1.1: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in reading.

1.1 Measure: STAR Reading assessment growth.

1.1 Target: 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.

1.1 Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year following winter and spring benchmarks.

Objective 1.2: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in math.

1.2 Measure: STAR Math assessment growth.

1.2 Target: 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.

1.2 Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year following winter and spring benchmarks.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) growth.

Objective 2.1: Formal assessments of therapeutic outcomes will indicate improvements.

2.1 Measure (a): CGAS rating fall pre-test to spring post-test change.

2.1 Target (a): 90% improve or maintain.

2.1 Measure (b): CGAS ratings “level” change from fall to spring.

2.1 Target (b): 40% advancing one or more levels.

2.1 Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year following fall rating (based on change from spring of previous year) and spring rating (based on change from fall).

Objective 2.2: Agencies will meet DESE attendance standard of “Approaching.”

2.2 Measure: Proportion of students with 90% attendance or higher.

2.2 Target: 80% (also examine improvement over baseline)

2.2 Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year following first and second semester.

Goal 3: SSD will place students with appropriate consideration of student need and growing SSD capacity.

Objective 3.1: The number/proportion of students returning to a less restrictive environment (LRE) will increase.

3.1 Measure: Number and proportion of students who transition from a POS placement to a more inclusive placement.

3.1 Target: Improvement over baseline.

3.1 Monitoring Schedule: Annually at the conclusion of the school year.

Objective 3.2: The number/proportion of students enrolled in POS agencies over time will remain consistent or decrease.

3.2 Measure: St. Louis County private/separate day facility rates as reported on the County-wide Special Education Profile.

3.2 Targets: (1) Maintain or decrease rate of private separate placements; (2) Maintain a rate of private separate placements that lies below the state-wide rate.

3.1 Monitoring Schedule: Annually at the conclusion of the school year (though comparisons to the state from the prior year can be reviewed following publication of the Special Education Profiles in late fall).

Objective 3.3: Students will receive high intensity SEB interventions in the referring school prior to their change of placement to POS.

3.3 Measure (a): The proportion of students enrolling in POS agencies from within St. Louis County over the course of the year who had a functional assessment derived behavior intervention plan prior to change of placement.

3.3 Target (a): 80%

3.3 Measure (b): The proportion of students enrolling in POS agencies from within St. Louis County over the course of the year who received social work services prior to change of placement.

3.3 Target (b): 80%

3.3 Monitoring Schedule: Twice per year following the conclusion of each semester.

Notes:

1. STAR defines the “moderate growth” rate as the median rate of growth per week for students who scored at a given percentile rank range in the fall (i.e., it is a rate of growth that 50% of students who begin at that reading level demonstrate). Though note that some assessments tend to show stronger growth rates in fall as opposed to spring; it is unclear if that is the case with STAR. Also, the second score used for a number of POS students was taken in February, whereas most students take the winter benchmark in December. Thus those students had a wider time span to receive instruction and make gains relative to expectations that did students in the comparison group. Though at the same time, their fall benchmark often occurred later (e.g., mid- to late-September) than is typical practice in SSD schools (which typically benchmark in mid-August).

2. The STAR Scaled Score (SS) is useful for comparing student performance over time and across grades. A scaled score is calculated based on the difficulty of questions and the number of correct responses. Because the same range is used for all students, scaled scores can be used to compare student performance across grade levels. STAR Reading scaled scores range from 0 to 1400. All norm-referenced scores are derived from the scaled score. The *moderate growth rate* is the amount a typical student is expected to grow per week. Based on national data, 50 percent of the students who started at this level were able to achieve this growth rate.

The STAR Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is a norm-referenced score that is similar to a percentile rank, but unlike percentile ranks, it is based on an equal interval scale. This means the difference between any two successive scores on the NCE scale has the same meaning throughout the scale. NCEs are useful in making comparisons between different achievement tests and for statistical computations; for example, determining an average score for a group of students. NCE scores range from 1 to 99 (with a median of 50).

Instructional Reading Level (IRL) is calculated after a student completes a Star Reading test; it is a criterion-referenced score that is the highest reading level at which a student is 80% proficient (or higher) at comprehending material with assistance. Research has found that this level of comprehension corresponds to being at least 90–98% proficient at recognizing words; Star Reading does not directly assess word recognition. IRL scores are Pre-Primer (PP), Primer (P), grades 1.0 through 12.9, and Post-High School (PHS).

3. One outlier was excluded from the math analysis based on the extreme score decrease from fall to winter.

4. Proportional weighted 90/90 attendance for fall 2015-16 was reported incorrectly (as 54.1% rather than 68.8%) in the 2015-16 POS II evaluation report.

Appendix A Descriptive Statistics

*Data is based on the 110 students who attended POS over the 2016-17 school year through February.

Enrollment by Grade

Grade	Student Count	Percent
01	1	0.9%
02	3	2.7%
03	8	7.3%
04	2	1.8%
05	5	4.5%
06	2	1.8%
07	10	9.1%
08	14	12.7%
09	15	13.6%
10	18	16.4%
11	14	12.7%
12	18	16.4%
Total	110	100.0%

Enrollment by Gender

Gender	Student Count	Percent
Female	33	30.0%
Male	77	70.0%
Total	110	100.0%

Enrollment by Disability Category

Disability	Student Count	Percent
Autism	23	20.9%
Emotional Disturbance	62	56.4%
Intellectual Disability	4	3.6%
Multiple Disabilities	3	2.7%
Orthopedic Impairment	1	0.9%
Other Health Impairment	15	13.6%
Specific Learning Disability	2	1.8%
Grand Total	110	100.0%

Enrollment by Race

Race	Student Count	Percent
Asian	2	1.8%
Black	53	48.2%
Hispanic	1	0.9%
Pacific Islander	1	0.9%
White	53	48.2%
Total	110	100.0%

Appendix B
POS MAP Test Results 2015-16

Content Area	Below Basic Count	Below Basic %	Basic Count	Basic %	Proficient Count	Proficient %	Advanced Count	Advanced %	Total Count
Communication Arts Total	28	73.7%	5	13.2%	4	10.5%	1	2.6%	38
EOC	2	33.3%		0.0%	3	50.0%	1	16.7%	6
MAP	21	87.5%	2	8.3%	1	4.2%		0.0%	24
MAPA	5	62.5%	3	37.5%		0.0%		0.0%	8
Mathematics Total	34	79.1%	5	11.6%	3	7.0%	1	2.3%	43
EOC	6	54.5%	3	27.3%	1	9.1%	1	9.1%	11
MAP	22	91.7%	2	8.3%		0.0%		0.0%	24
MAPA	6	75.0%		0.0%	2	25.0%		0.0%	8
Science Total	20	69.0%	7	24.1%	2	6.9%		0.0%	29
EOC	6	46.2%	5	38.5%	2	15.4%		0.0%	13
MAP	12	92.3%	1	7.7%		0.0%		0.0%	13
MAPA	2	66.7%	1	33.3%		0.0%		0.0%	3
Social Studies Total (all EOC)	3	42.9%	2	28.6%	1	14.3%	1	14.3%	7

Appendix C Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS)

The Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) was first published in 1983. It is a measure developed by Schaffer and colleagues to provide a global measure of level of functioning in children and adolescents. The measure provides a single global rating only, on a scale of 0-100. In making their rating, clinicians make use of a glossary to determine the meaning of the points on the scale.

The CGAS has potential limitations as a program evaluation tool. These include use of a single "item" as the basis of assessing improvement, a somewhat subjective (and/or setting-influenced) rating system, unclear inter-rater reliability, possible lack of sensitivity to change over relatively short periods of time, and omission of the client (student) perspective. These limitations may preclude strong conclusions and comparisons regarding the efficacy of services the POS agencies provide.

Score Range	Qualitative Descriptors	Alternate Qualitative Descriptors
100-91	Superior functioning	Doing very well
90-81	Good functioning	Doing well
80-71	No more than a slight impairment in functioning	Doing all right – minor impairment
70-61	Some difficulty in a single area, but generally functioning pretty well	Some problems – in one area only
60-51	Variable functioning with sporadic difficulties	Some noticeable problems – in more than one area
50-41	Moderate degree of interference in functioning	Obvious problems – moderate impairment in most areas or severe in one area
40-31	Major impairment to functioning in several areas	Serious problems – major impairment in several areas and unable to function in one area
30-21	Unable to function in almost all areas	Severe problems – unable to function in almost all situations
20-11	Needs considerable supervision	Very severely impaired – so impaired that considerable supervision is required for safety
10-1	Needs constant supervision	Extremely impaired – so impaired that constant supervision is required for safety

Note:

- 71-100 indicates normal functioning
- 61-70 indicates a probably clinical case
- 1-60 indicates a definite clinical case