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Overview of Program Monitoring

Program monitoring is the systematic and continual observation and recording of key program aspects (Malone et al., 2014). The data gathered through program monitoring is used to appraise whether a program is on track to meet its expected outcomes. Frequent, intermittent assessment of program implementation and outcomes provides leaders and program administrators with timely information and performance feedback that can guide programmatic decisions. For many SSD programs, including those for which evaluation is required by MSIP-5, monitoring of activities, action plans, and key outcomes represents an efficient and actionable approach that is preferable to less frequent, more in-depth evaluation. Effective program monitoring is contingent upon a well-developed program plan that clearly defines program mission, resources and activities, goals and objectives, and expected outcomes. As one component of program monitoring, it is recommended that some form of voice of customer (VOC) feedback be solicited at minimum annually. When monitoring indicates that a program is consistently failing to meet expectations, an in-depth evaluation or some other corrective action may be recommended.

High quality program monitoring requires the identification and specification of outcomes, indicators, measures, benchmarks, baseline, and targets. The following definitions of these components are adapted from Malone, Mark,& Narayan (2014).

**Outcome**: An expected result in an individual’s behavior, knowledge, or skills, or the change in practices or policies attained as a result of participation in an activity or program. In other words, what is expected to happen as a result of a program.

**Indicator**: An observable and measurable behavior or finding used to understand information about complex systems. Indicators are used to show whether progress is being made and the extent to which outcomes are being achieved.

**Measure**: An instrument, device, or method that provides information, often quantifiable data, on an outcome/indicator. A measure, or metric, provides data that allows for judgments regarding the progress and goal achievement.

**Benchmark**: A standard against which a program’s results and progress can be compared. Often performance by similar groups, programs, or organizations can serve as a benchmark.

**Baseline**: The level of performance indicated by a measure prior to the implementation of a program or intervention. Baseline is used as one reference point for measuring future progress.

**Target**: A desired value or level of a measure at a specified time in the future. The target is a measurable result being sought. Actual progress is measured against the target to determine achievement of program outcomes.

These abbreviated reports review performance data from the previous fiscal year (as well as the current fiscal year, if available/applicable) for programs designated by DESE and/or the District as requiring at minimum a biennial evaluation. Monitoring results for all programs will be provided to the Board of Education across several separate reports submitted throughout the year.
Purchase of Service

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Evaluator
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Contributors
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Summary and Recommendations

- All previously-developed action plans have either been completed or are on schedule for completion. One additional action plan was added.
- POS expenditures over 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years were relatively stable.
- Use of a new social-emotional assessment, the DESSA Mini, was initiated for POS students in 2018-19. The assessment is strengths (rather than deficit) based. Initial administrations suggested mostly “negligible” or “small” growth among students over the first semester of the school year. Targets will be set following the initial year of implementation.
- The 90/90 attendance rate across POS sites increased in 2017-18, though the first semester 2018-19 rate is lower in comparison to recent years. Rates remain below target. First semester proportional attendance among POS agencies that serve higher numbers of SSD students (i.e., Great Circle, ECH, and Logos) tends to be low (with rates between 50% and 70%) and dipped in fall of 2018-19.
- STAR assessment targets for growth were nearly met for reading and exceeded for math. The percent of students meeting fall to winter growth targets increased substantially in math relative to the two prior years. The number of students with both fall and winter scores available for analysis was lower than has been the case in recent years, however.
- The number of students transitioning to a less restrictive setting from a POS placement continues to climb incrementally each school year.
- The private separate placement rate in St. Louis County has held steady at 0.4% over three years. The statewide rate was 0.8% each of the past three years.
- The percentage of students who had a behavior intervention plan (84%) or direct social work services (79%) documented in the IEP prior to the initiation of a change of placement to POS continues to rise. This result suggests that referring schools/teams are increasingly implementing (and/or better documenting) a broad spectrum of best-practice behavioral strategies available prior to initiating a change of placement to POS.

New Action Plans Required as a Result of Evaluation Findings: (previously-developed action plans will remain in effect unless identified as complete)

1. An improvement cycle will be conducted to address gaps in POS data collection, exchange, and storage.

   Anticipated Date of Completion: December 2019

Brief Program Description

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. 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.

The key, broad goals of this program include:

1. Students will demonstrate social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) growth.
2. Students will progress academically.
3. SSD will place students with appropriate consideration of student need and growing SSD capacity.

An annual report of the progress and status of the Purchase of Service program is required under Board Policy IM. The most recent evaluation report for this program was approved by the Board on 4/10/18.

**Action Plans From Most Recent Evaluation/Monitoring Report(s)**

**Action Plan 1 (expected completion date December 2017):** The Purchase of Service teacher will attend standards-based IEP training.

   Status of Action Plan: Complete.

**Action Plan 2 (expected completion date 2018-19 school year):** 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.

   Status of Action Plan: Complete. POS agencies are assessing students using the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment K-8th Grade (DESSA mini), consistent with SSD separate schools and programs. Initial results are provided in this report.

**Action Plan 3 (expected completion date 2018-19 school year):** Increase attendance of partner district staff at IEP meetings.

   Status of Action Plan: On Schedule. Expectation for each agency to invite appropriate partner district staff has been communicated to agency directors. POS staff have also begun sending each partner district liaison and director/lead AC a schedule of upcoming meetings for their students each month for the following month.

**Action Plan 4 (expected completion date 2018-19 school year):** Share the components of standards-based IEPs with agencies. Consider the appropriateness and use of standards-based IEP goals for program evaluation purposes.

   Status of Action Plan: On Schedule. The POS teacher is working with each agency to implement a "train the trainer" model where each agency will have an "expert" on staff to continuously train and monitor their staff. We continue to promote agency staff to use standards-based IEP goals and improve data collection practices. This has been a challenge at our biggest agency, Great Circle, due in part to staff turnover.

**Action Plan 5 (expected completion date June 2019):** Collaborate with Logos staff to further analyze attendance rates, review attendance trends during agency meetings, and confer when student absences exceed a predetermined threshold indicative of chronic absence (e.g., 10 days).

   Status of Action Plan: On Schedule. Attendance data is being reviewed consistently and Logos staff is working with students to monitor their own attendance data and set goals for improvement.
Descriptive Program Data:

As of the end of March, 114 students had attended a purchase of service placement at any point over school year 2018-19. Eighty-four of those students (73.7%) were male. Attendees were predominantly African-American (53.5%) or white (44.7%). The MAP-Alternative eligibility rate among POS students was 11%. Summaries by grade and educational disability category are provided below.

POS Student Count by Grade Level 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>8th</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>11th</th>
<th>12th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POS Student Count by Educational Disability 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Type</th>
<th>Multiple Disabilities</th>
<th>Specific Learning Disability</th>
<th>Intellectual Disability</th>
<th>Other Health Impairment</th>
<th>Autism</th>
<th>Emotional Disturbance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Program Cost and Cost Effectiveness:

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Expenditures:

- Salary and Benefits: $209,463.16
- Agency Reimbursement: $2,333,809.17
- Total Costs: $2,543,272.33

2017-18 Cost Per Full-Time Equivalent Student (81.2 FTE in 2016-17): $31,333.13

Reimbursement across Individual Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>2016-17 Reimbursement</th>
<th>2017-18 Reimbursement</th>
<th>2018-19 Reimbursement (Through February)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center for Autism Education</td>
<td>187,800.00</td>
<td>209,929.73</td>
<td>181,196.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Child’s Hope</td>
<td>430,905.62</td>
<td>348,093.63</td>
<td>163,790.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giant Steps</td>
<td>46,475.62</td>
<td>43,272.11</td>
<td>24,651.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Circle</td>
<td>1,011,928.42</td>
<td>1,187,073.72</td>
<td>923,588.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logos School</td>
<td>557,021.12</td>
<td>447,835.60</td>
<td>365,162.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marygrove</td>
<td>95,050.77</td>
<td>97,604.38</td>
<td>98,838.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$2,329,181.55</td>
<td>$2,333,809.17</td>
<td>$1,757,228.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SSD staff dedicated to the POS program as of 2018-19 included one full-time administrator, one full-time teacher, and a three-quarters-time secretary. Staff in 2017-18 included two part-time/contract administrators, one full-time teacher, and a three-quarters-time secretary.

Monitoring Results

Voice of Customer Assessment:

SSD staff solicit voice of customer feedback and input through POS/Agency meetings held four times per year. Once per year, agencies self-rate components of implementation and service quality using rubrics adapted by SSD. These ratings provide an opportunity to identify both needs and accomplishments. Historically, parents have reported favorable relationships with agencies, citing student progress as evidenced by fewer removals from school and disciplinary phone calls home. Agency directors report appreciating increasing collaboration along with the opportunity to...
to participate in trainings offered by SSD. Additional mechanisms for obtaining feedback and input from agencies were initiated this school year.

**Objective 1.1:** Formal assessments of therapeutic outcomes will indicate improvements.

**Measures:** DESSA Mini T-Score change  
**Performance Targets:** Performance targets will be established after the initial year of implementation of the DESSA Mini has concluded.  
**Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):** National norms, SSD separate school/program results  
**Monitoring Schedule:** Collect data three times per year

**Results:** 2018-19 was the initial year of the DESSA Mini assessment and as such the results might be characterized as exploratory. The DESSA Mini is a nationally-standardized, brief rating scale assessment designed for use as a universal screening and progress monitoring system for social-emotional competencies of students in grades K-8. The DESSA Mini is completed by a teacher or other adult who interacts directly with the student. Students are rated on the frequency with which they exhibit eight separate academic enabling/prosocial behaviors. Ratings are intended to be based on only behaviors directly observed by the rater over the previous four weeks.

Higher T-Scores on the DESSA equate to greater social emotional competency. Qualitative score descriptors are as follows:

- T-Scores 40 and below = “Need for Instruction” (the child was rated as showing few behaviors associated with social-emotional competence)
- T-Scores of 41-59 = “Typical”
- T-Scores of 60 and above = “Strength”

The DESSA Mini manual also provides guidelines for evaluating growth that are reproduced in the table below.

**DESSA Mini Progress Monitoring Guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Category</th>
<th>T-Score Change</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negligible/None</td>
<td>Less than 2</td>
<td>Supports are Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Supports are Minimally Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Supports are Moderately Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>8 or Higher</td>
<td>Supports are Working Well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for POS students based on 2018-19 fall and winter administrations appear in the table below. Students were assessed more comprehensively in winter. Only those with a score each assessment period were included in growth analyses. The average T-score among POS students across the two administrations was 43.6, which falls toward the lower band of the “Typical” range. Among those with two scores, average T-score slightly declined from fall to winter. The T-Score increased across the two administrations for 46% of students. However, a large proportion of student ratings reflected T-Score changes associated with the qualitative descriptors “Negligible/none” (61%) and “Small” (22%). The assessment will be administered once more late spring.

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1 Though the DESSA Mini was normed on students in grades K-8, SSD is currently using it with students in grades 9-12 as well. Given this non-standardized use, the results for secondary students should be interpreted with some caution. However, the norms are based on grades K-8 combined (rather than individual grade/age bands), which may reduce non-standard administration concerns.
POS DESSA Mini Results 2018-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Students with Both Fall and Winter Ratings</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students with at Least One Score</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average T-Score (both administrations)</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average T-Score Fall-Winter Gain</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Percentile Rank (both administrations)</td>
<td>30.3 %ile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Students with Fall-Winter T-Score Gain</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Score Change Less than 2</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Score Change 2-4</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Score Change 5-7</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Score Change 8 or Higher</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 1.2:** Agencies will meet DESE attendance standard of “Approaching.”

**Measure:** Proportional 90/90 Attendance Rate (per current DESE formula)

**Performance Target:** 80% (also assess improvement over baseline)

**Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):** SSD Separate Schools

**Monitoring Schedule:** Twice per year following first and second semester

**Results:** 90/90 attendance over 4 years is provided in the chart below. Both fall semester (blue line) and entire year (orange line) results are included. The proportional attendance calculation was modified slightly starting in 2017-18 to allow partial contribution to the rate for students whose attendance was 87.5%-90% (0.5 credit) or 85.0%-87.4% (0.25 credit). The 90/90 attendance rate across POS sites increased in 2017-18, though the first semester 2018-19 rate is down in comparison to recent years. Attendance rates remain below the 80% target.

**Proportional Percent Above 90 Attendance**

*90/90 Calculation Modified 2017-18*

Proportional attendance for first semester over 3 years by school is shown in the following chart. Attendance rates are higher among agencies serving small numbers of SSD students. Fall 2019 rates are depressed for Great Circle, ECH, and Logos. Proportional attendance remains relatively low at those sites.
Objective 2.1: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in reading.

*Measure:* STAR Reading assessment growth  
*Performance Target:* 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.  
*Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):* SSD public separate schools  
*Monitoring Schedule:* Twice per year following winter and spring benchmarks

Objective 2.2: Students will make acceptable progress across the year in math.

*Measure:* STAR Math assessment growth  
*Performance Target:* 50% of students will demonstrate progress equivalent to the median national growth rate.  
*Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):* SSD public separate schools  
*Monitoring Schedule:* Twice per year following winter and spring benchmarks

**Results:** Results are displayed in the charts below. Student fall to winter growth across three school years is compared. Two metrics reflective of growth are provided: (1) Percent of students meeting or exceeding the scaled score median growth rate target for their grade, and (2) Percent of students with a Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) change exceeding zero (which reflects normative gain against peers). The number of students with scores in each period who could be included in the analysis was relatively small, and about half that relative to 2017 and 2018; thus some caution should be taken in drawing comparisons with prior years’ results.

Targets for growth were nearly met for reading (45.5%) and exceeded for math (63.2%). In reading, fall to winter growth increased moderately in comparison to the prior year. The percent of students meeting fall to winter growth targets in math increased substantially relative to the two prior years.
Note. Group sizes for POS are: 2017 Reading 44, 2018 Reading 35, 2019 Reading 22; 2017 Math 45, 2018 Math 40, 2019 Math 19. Students who had only one score or whose fall score exceeded the 75th percentile were excluded.

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

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

**Performance Target:** Improvement over baseline

**Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):** N/A

**Monitoring Schedule:** Annually at the conclusion of the school year

**Results:** Including those students that were being served in a private separate placement at the end of the 2017-18 school year, 15 students have transitioned to a less restrictive setting to date during the 2018-19 school year. The number of students transitioning to a LRE continues to climb gradually each school year.

Students Transitioned to Less Restrictive Setting
(at time of spring evaluation report for current year)

Note. Two additional students are in the process of preparing to change placement to a LRE this spring.

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

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

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

**Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):** State-wide private separate placement rate

**Monitoring Schedule:** Annually (comparisons to the state from the prior year can be reviewed following publication of the Special Education Profiles, which typically occurs in late fall)

**Results:** This target was met. The rate of private separate placements among students with IEPs in St. Louis County has held at 0.4% each of the last 3 years. The state-wide rate of 0.8% in 2018 was double that for St. Louis County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSD Private Separate Placement Rate</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-wide Private Separate Placement Rate</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missouri DESE annual Special Education Profiles.

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

**Measures:**

3.3(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(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.

**Performance Target for 3.3(a) and 3.3(b):** 80%

**Other Comparative Benchmark(s) (if appropriate/applicable):** N/A

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

**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. Results are provided in the table below. These data include all students for whom a change of placement meeting (to POS) was initiated and to which a POS representative was invited (not all of these students ultimately enrolled at a POS agency). The data exclude students who transfer to a POS agency from a school outside of St. Louis County, as SSD would have no input into IEP/service design for these students.

The performance target has been met for BIPs and nearly met for Social Work thus far through 2018-19. The percent of incoming plans reflecting these services increased over 2017-18 and has risen substantially over four years. This result suggests that schools are increasingly implementing (and/or better documenting) the full spectrum of best-practice behavioral strategies available prior to initiating a change of placement to POS.

**Behavior Intervention Plans and Direct Social Work Services Prior to Change of Placement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Intervention Plan</td>
<td>55.6% (10/18)</td>
<td>37.5% (6/16)</td>
<td>77.3% (17/22)</td>
<td>84.2% (16/19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Social Work</td>
<td>33.3% (6/18)</td>
<td>68.8% (11/16)</td>
<td>72.7% (16/22)</td>
<td>78.9% (15/19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Results through time of spring program evaluation report. Includes all change of placement meetings to which a POS representative was invited. Excludes transfers from outside of St. Louis County. Note that in some cases, direct social work is declined as a service in favor of intervention alternatives that may be more appropriate given a student’s disability and presenting concerns.

**Ongoing Evaluation Planning:** (select all that apply)

- ☒ Continue to monitor using same metrics and schedule.
- ☐ Revise evaluation indicators and metrics.
Proposed revisions:
☐ Conduct an in-depth evaluation.
☐ Revise the program description/plan.
☒ Other action(s) for improvement: Set performance targets for the DESSA Mini based on initial year results.

Rationale for Selection(s): Monitoring plan remains appropriate.