SPECIALIZED FOR SUCCESS

2022-27 STRATEGIC PLAN

SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY
SECTION 1

Introduction to SSD
A Message from the Superintendent

We Are Specialized for Success!

We began the process of creating our new strategic plan and comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) update in the 2020–21 school year during a period of unprecedented change and upheaval in public education. The historic pandemic caused schools to evaluate priorities, recognize inequities, and reflect more deeply on the ways in which they realized the promise of education for all.

Our new strategic plan and CSIP represent a streamlined approach to ensuring each person in our District has the tools they need to focus on our core business of teaching and learning. It is the foundational work that aligns all divisions, departments, schools, staff, and resources towards our goal of ensuring all students realize their full potential in life and learning. Our hope is that it supports the future work of our specialized staff and leads to meaningful change in ways that support more equitable learning and life outcomes for each of our students.

“The new strategic plan and CSIP will support the future work of our specialized staff and the unique needs of our students.”

Thank you to the many stakeholders and staff members who have contributed their time and energy to developing this comprehensive, ambitious blueprint for our District. Your input is valuable and greatly appreciated.

I look forward to seeing our plan implemented and watching SSD fully realize its mission and vision.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Keenan
Superintendent of Schools

ELIZABETH KEENAN, PH.D.
2022 Board of Education

Dr. Dan Cuneo  
*Board President  
Subdistrict 2*

Ms. Katie Pottoff  
*Board Vice President  
Subdistrict 3*

Dr. Yuval Asner  
*Director  
Subdistrict 7*

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Subdistrict 5*

Mr. Curtis Faulkner  
*Director  
Subdistrict 1*

Ms. Tiffany Hudson  
*Director  
Subdistrict 6*

Mr. Scott Moeller  
*Director  
Subdistrict 4*

Governance

Special School District is governed by both a Governing Council and a Board of Education. The Governing Council is a 22-member oversight board consisting of one Board member from each of St. Louis County’s 22 public school districts. The Governing Council meets four times per year and reviews and approves the annual budget, strategic plan, and comprehensive school improvement plan. They also interview and appoint the seven members of SSD’s Board of Education.

Every four years since 1998, the Governing Council appoints a Public Review Committee (PRC) to conduct a thorough review of SSD, including the structure, governance, administration, financial management, delivery of services, cooperation with partner school districts, and advocacy for children with disabilities.

The Board of Education provides direct governance of the District. Meeting twice monthly, the Board sets direction, establishes policy, and ensures appropriate management and fiscal responsibility. The Board also hires and evaluates the Superintendent.
MISSION
To support and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential.

VISION
All students realize their full potential in life and learning.

VALUES
- Every student, regardless of learning ability or socioeconomic status, deserves access to the services they need to succeed.
- Everything we do revolves around our commitment to students and their success.
- We work with parents, students, partner districts, and the community to benefit students.
- Every student, regardless of learning ability or socioeconomic status, deserves access to the services they need to succeed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
- Data-based, standardized approach to instruction
- Strategic approach to high-need districts
- Strategic alignment within SSD
- Systematized approach to facilities
- Recruitment, onboarding, and retention of staff
- Equitable distribution of resources
- Awareness of all resources
- Optimal use of all resources
- Relationships with external and internal stakeholders
- Inter-departmental communications
- Family engagement

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION
At Special School District of St. Louis County, we equip and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential. We believe the student always comes first, recognizing the importance of each student’s unique needs to realize a productive, independent, and fulfilling life.

SSD provides special education services to students ages three through 21 in a variety of placements, which are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Services are based entirely on a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). Placements range from SSD teachers providing special education services in the student’s home school and district (partner district) to students attending an SSD special education school or a private separate agency. Ninety-seven percent of students receiving SSD services attend school in the school district where they live.

SSD also operates two career and technical high schools with 28 programs in a wide range of technical areas. Technical course offerings for students in grades 10–12 range from traditional technical fields, such as precision machining and construction, to emerging fields like network administration and health sciences.
SSD, the largest specialized education provider in the state of Missouri, was established in 1957. The voters of St. Louis County approved a tax levy for its creation to support the educational needs of children with disabilities. The District grew in 1960 when voters approved a second levy to finance the construction of special education schools.

In 1965, an additional levy passed which allowed the District to become the career and technical education provider for all students in St. Louis County, in support of the Vocational Education Act. Additional levies were passed in 1970 to build more special education schools. In 1981, SSD took a major step in expanding its programs when it received approval from the State of Missouri to start a program to train practical nurses.

Today, SSD serves almost 22,000 students with disabilities in our SSD schools and 22 partner district classrooms, over 1,400 students in career and technical education, more than 900 students who attend private/parochial schools, and over 100 adult students working toward their practical nurse licensure.
Map of Special School District

- **Subdistrict 1**
  Hazelwood | Jennings | Maplewood-Richmond Heights

- **Subdistrict 2**
  Affton | Bayless | Hancock Place | Mehlville

- **Subdistrict 3**
  Parkway

- **Subdistrict 4**
  Ferguson-Florissant | Pattonville
  Riverview Gardens

- **Subdistrict 5**
  Brentwood | Kirkwood | Lindbergh
  Valley Park | Webster Groves

- **Subdistrict 6**
  Ladue | Normandy | Ritenour
  University City

- **Subdistrict 7**
  Clayton | Rockwood
Facts and Figures: SSD Students, Staff, and Schools

SSD AT A GLANCE

- 10th largest employer in St. Louis
- $474 million operating revenue
- $459 million expenditures
- 510 square miles covered by SSD

24,728 STUDENTS IN 286 BUILDINGS across St. Louis County

our students

- 648 Special Education
- 20,289 Partner Districts
- 868 Early Childhood
- 1,410 Career & Technical Education
- 953 SNAP (avg)
- 556 Homebound (avg)
- 47 Courts (avg)

- 47% Caucasian
- 41% African-American
- 6% Hispanic
- 2% Multi-Race
- 2% Asian
- 1% Native American/ Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

- 97% Attend school in their home district
- 59% Receive free/reduced price lunches

our staff

- 477 Part-time staff
- 5,296 Full-time staff
- 76% Hold Advanced Degrees
- 13 Average years of teaching experience

- 236 Administrative-level staff
- 1,743 Paraprofessional-level staff
- 2,747 Teacher-level staff
- 470 Operational staff
- 477 Other staff members

our schools

- SSD SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY: 5 SSD schools
- North South Tech High Schools: 2 Technical high schools
- 256 Partner district schools
- 22 Partner districts across St. Louis County
Facts and Figures: SSD Students, Staff, and Schools

Students Served
- SSD Schools 648
- Partner District Schools 20,289
- Technical Schools 1,410

Transportation
- 287 Bus drivers
- 209 Bus monitors
- 352 Buses in fleet
- 256 Daily routes
- 2,107,599 Miles driven in 2020-21

SSD Special Education Students by Disability
- Other Health Impairment 22%
- Learning Disabilities 19%
- Speech Impairment 15%
- Autism 15%
- Emotional Disturbance 9%
- Intellectual Disability 7%
- Language Impairment 5%
- Young Child with Developmental Delay 5%
- Other 3%

21,805 Students
Receiving Special Education Services
Percentage of Partner District K-12 Students Attending SSD Schools and Programs

Source: SSD separate site enrollment is based on preliminary 2021-22 December 1 count data from SSD’s Phoenix student information database. Partner district enrollments used in the calculation were retrieved from the DESE comprehensive data site (District Enrollment 2021-22 Preliminary).
Early Childhood Special Education

For more than 30 years, SSD’s Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program has provided special education to children starting at the age of three and extending until they begin kindergarten.

868 students
Serving 14 of 22 partner districts

School–Aged Programs

Special education for school-aged (kindergarten through twelfth grade) students is provided by SSD in partner districts, our special education schools, our programs, and with the support of private agencies.

20,937 students
22 school districts
5 special education schools
3 programs
9 service sites

Vocational Skills Program

The Vocational Skills Program (VSP) serves students who have completed four years of high school but require extended programming to develop the skills needed to move toward post-secondary goals and gain successful employment. Students in VSP are immersed in a business setting, allowing them to build general work behaviors and soft skills needed for entry-level employment.

215 students
30 sites
Through the District’s Special Non-Public Access Program (SNAP), SSD provides programming outside of school to children who are eligible for special education, but attend private, parochial, or home school. **Avg. 953 students**

**24 sites throughout St. Louis County**

SSD collaborates with our partner districts to provide Homebound Instruction and special education services to students throughout St. Louis County who are unable to access services in a school setting due to injury, illness, or medical condition. **Avg. 556 students**

**22 partner districts**

SSD provides instruction and the opportunity to earn credits towards graduation for students who are incarcerated at both the St. Louis County Juvenile Detention Center and Lakeside Court appointed residential facility. The focus of the program is to give students the skills they need to make a successful transition back to their home school and/or post-school life. **Avg. 45 students**

**2 Site locations**
SSD offers the largest career and technical education (CTE) program in the State of Missouri. Our two CTE high schools provide relevant, high-quality instruction in a wide variety of career pathways. Programs are focused on developing real-world skills, providing hands-on experience, and connecting students to employers and mentors. Instructors are industry professionals with vast expertise and a keen interest in supporting upcoming generations as they explore the world of work. Acceptance is competitive and conducted through a rubric-scored process.

**Career and Technical Education**

- 1,410 students
- 2 high schools
- 28 programs
- Avg. 55% go to college
- Avg. 35% join workforce

Applied Technology Services, SSD’s adult education program, offers a 12-month Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program to individuals 18 years and older. Classes operate year-round and are offered at two sites in the St. Louis area, South Tech and North Tech high schools. Instructors are certified by DESE and hold a bachelor’s degree in nursing and a current Missouri Registered Nurse (RN) license.

**Adult Education Program**

- 132 LPN students/year
- 2 site locations

Program is approved by the Missouri State Board of Nursing and is accredited by DESE.
**Audiology Services**

SSD Audiology Services provides supports to all children in St. Louis County from early childhood to graduation or age 21 (whichever is first). Services include diagnostic hearing evaluation, amplification and assistive listening device evaluation, cochlear implant and hearing aid troubleshooting, and in services with students, families, and school staff regarding hearing loss and amplification.

7,234 students served/year

3 site locations

**FACE**

Formerly PEDA and Family Engagement

The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) program partners with families to support each student's academic, social, and emotional success. FACE staff provides direct support to families and the community through workshops, resources, referrals, consultation, a lending library, website resources, the Parent Leadership Institute, and Parent Mentor Outreach Ambassadors.

50+ workshops offered annually

**PAC**

Established in 1986

The District’s Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of families who collaborate on improving the education, confidence, and social outcomes of each student served by SSD. The PAC consists of five parents or guardians (one member and four alternates) from each partner district and SSD special education school.

9 meetings per year

Support for Families
Strategic Plan vs. CSIP

What is the difference between a strategic plan and a comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP)?

The strategic plan is a long-range plan founded on the vision, mission, and core values of the District. It is more visionary than the improvement plan and focuses on long-term goals. The strategic plan provides direction for the improvement plan.

The CSIP defines the steps needed to achieve the strategic plan’s long-term goals. It is more operational than visionary, and includes short-term goals, with detailed actions for each goal. The improvement plan’s actions are evaluated more frequently than the strategic plan and it is formatively reviewed and revised quarterly throughout the year.

The long-range strategic plan helps the District set visionary expectations and the annual improvement plan focuses on operations, making it possible to achieve those expectations. At the end of the year, both the strategic and improvement plans are evaluated for success. The strategic plan’s evaluation is formative, while the improvement plan’s evaluation is summative.
The strategic plan denotes overarching goals, but they are not the only goals being worked towards. There are many plans which are reviewed and revised annually, with goals and objectives guiding the work we do throughout the District, such as the District comprehensive improvement plan, school improvement plans, and the equity framework. Although there are three strategic priority areas that are part of the strategic plan, there are other areas, strategies, and objectives that are being considered and implemented concurrently to this guiding document.
SECTION 2

Strategic Plan
Planning for Success

SSD developed the new strategic plan over the course of the 2020–21 school year. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee, comprised of parents/guardians, staff, and community members, conducted a detailed examination of external and internal factors impacting the District. Stakeholders from across St. Louis County participated in interviews and focus groups to provide their input, and analysis of the gathered information told us what our community valued, where we could improve, and what the District should focus on moving forward.

An extensive districtwide SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was performed to create a framework for analyzing the District’s areas for growth and improvement. The SWOT analysis provided a focus on SSD strengths while minimizing any threats and taking advantage of opportunities for maximum improvement. This comprehensive review of SSD resulted in a multi-year strategic plan that establishes District priorities and outlines aligned goals and strategies. The new plan includes an updated mission, vision, and core values developed with stakeholder input and revised by our Board of Education. This plan affirms those values and ensures we will support and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential. Through revisions and additions, leadership will ensure the plan continues to fulfill its purpose of improving the District’s capacity, quality, and sustainability.

The implementation of the new strategic plan begins with the leadership of the superintendent, followed by each school, as they annually develop and deploy school improvement plans that are aligned with the Board’s goals. The strategic plan will guide the administration and staff of each school throughout the system in their work with students, parents, and the community as a whole.
External Factors
A review of SSD’s external environment told us the following:

- St. Louis County’s population, demographic factors, and economic conditions have been relatively stable.
- While overall public school enrollment in St. Louis County has been fairly consistent, different parts of the county have experienced some change. Districts in North County have seen slight enrollment drops, while districts in South County have seen slight enrollment increases.
- From 2016 to 2020, the count of children with disabilities in St. Louis County school districts increased by about 800 students.
- From 2017 to 2020, non-public school enrollment was fairly constant, as was the percentage of non-public school students identified as having a disability.
- The Missouri legislature has increased its support of charter and non-public schools in recent years.
- The Missouri State Board of Education has approved a new accreditation system that focuses on district processes and student outcomes.

Internal Considerations
A review of SSD’s internal workings yielded the following key themes:

- SSD has a knowledgeable, skilled staff.
- SSD is fiscally sound.
- SSD facilities are sound and well-maintained.
- There is a lack of consistent, strategic, data-based planning and processes.
- There is a lack of clear communication among departments and with stakeholders.
- Staff is uncertain about the availability and sustainability of resources.
- The District must address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
The purpose of the strategic plan is to improve District performance, in both operations and instruction, in order to fulfill our mission. The District will measure performance in three ways: key performance indicators (KPIs), District report card, and balanced scorecard.

**Key Performance Indicators**

The purpose of a KPI is to show how well the organization or department is meeting its goals that are aligned with the District’s mission. It is intended to measure the most important things the department does and is based on results or outcomes.

**Quarterly District Report Card**

A District report card will show SSD’s performance on key metrics. It answers the question “what is happening now?” The report card will provide a quarterly detailed update so that the District can make adjustments to address areas of concern.

**Annual Balanced Scorecard**

A balanced scorecard is an annual view of District performance that balances operational factors with instructional ones. This allows judgments about how efficiently SSD is operating, as well as how effectively it is achieving desired results.
Special School District of St. Louis County, the largest specialized education provider in the state, equips and empowers students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential. This is realized through an inclusive, collaborative approach, supported by our comprehensive resources and deep expertise - all of which is centered on each student's unique needs.

MISSION
To support and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential

VISION
All students realize their full potential in life and learning

CORE VALUES
Equity
Commitment
Collaboration
Goal and Strategies
Implement effective strategic, data-based systems that efficiently and equitably support instruction and operations.

**Strategy 1**
Develop administrators’ skill sets for strategic priority setting for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

**Strategy 2**
Develop internal capacity for using data systems for gathering and analyzing data.
# Goal and Strategies

Optimize resources to equitably support students to meet their greatest potential.

## Strategy 1

Identify the resources (type, quantity, and purpose) each department utilizes to accomplish its mission.

## Strategy 2

Develop data-based processes to determine the effective and efficient distribution of resources.
Goal and Strategies

Create a multi-channel communication strategy that enables two-way communication and improves relationships across all stakeholder groups.

**Strategy 1**
Establish relationships with businesses, agencies, and other community stakeholders that will support student success.

**Strategy 2**
Engage with families.

**Strategy 3**
Establish communications systems among departments and with staff at all levels.
As part of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and Work Groups, the following individuals played an important role in developing the strategic plan. Their time and effort made its development possible.

**Strategic Plan Steering Committee**

- Dr. Elizabeth Keenan
- Kevin Andert
- Doug Austin
- Dr. Paul Bauer
- Dr. Mollie Bolton
- Toby Clodfelter
- Dr. Kelly Grigsby
- Dr. Jeff Haug
- Jennifer Henry
- Dr. Michael Maclin
- Chaketa Mack-Riddle
- Wendi Pendergrass
- Bridget Wildschuetz
- Alan Wheat

**Strategic Plan Work Groups**

**Facilities**
- Toby Clodfelter
- Dr. Kelly Grigsby
- Dr. Jeff Haug
- Jennifer Henry
- Dr. Michael Maclin

**Finance**
- Dr. Jeff Haug
- Shirley Moore
- Sara Schaefer

**Operations**
- Dennis Mix
- Doug Austin
- Carmen Harris
- John Mueller
- Kenny Mulder

**Student Performance**
- Dr. Mollie Bolton
- Kevin Andert
- Clarence Hines
- Dr. Michael Maclin
- Tina Maksche
- Alan Wheat

**Communications**
- Jennifer Henry
SECTION 3

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan
SSD’s comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) directs the overall improvement of its educational programs and services in support of student achievement. The plan is written in accordance with guidelines from Missouri’s Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Missouri statute (RsMo 162.856) and was approved by the SSD Board of Education on [date] and the Governing Council on [date].

The CSIP will be implemented concurrently with the five-year strategic plan, which is focused on the operational supports and processes underpinning the provision of quality educational programs.

Planning Process
The 2022–27 CSIP was developed using the Strategic and Responsive Solutions (SRS) Protocol[1], a districtwide project planning framework. This approach facilitated identifying areas of concern, understanding the associated underlying issues and creating a road map of the work that needs to be done to improve student outcomes.

Planning through an Equity Lens
All planning activities were structured through an equity lens by making direct connections between the strength of student outcomes (i.e., social-emotional-behavioral, academic, graduation, and post-secondary) as compared to their level of access to services, supports, and opportunities. In addition, student identity (i.e., race, gender, type of disability) and the social conditions students are exposed to (i.e., poverty, mobility, trauma, English language learner) were considered to identify disproportionate outcomes which point to bias, inequities, and systems that are unresponsive to the needs of all students.

### Opportunity/Access

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<th>CONTEXTUAL FACTORS</th>
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<td>- Incidence &amp; identification rates</td>
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<td>- Suspensions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Seclusions/isolations/retraits</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Universals</td>
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<th>SERVICE PROVIDERS</th>
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| - Staffing levels (caseload/workload, teacher/para/student ratios)
| - Teacher/para absences
| - Staff vacancies/turnover
| - Staff engagement |

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| - Universals: HLPs
| - IEP minutes assigned
| - Intervention availability/MTSS
| - Data-informed decision making |

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| - Student participation in IEP meetings
| - Student voice
| - Transition plans |

### Outcomes

**ACADEMIC**
- Math
- ELA
- College & career readiness
- Kindergarten readiness

**GRADUATION RATES**
- Graduation
- Dropout

**WHOLE STUDENT**
- Social emotional
- Behavioral

**POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES**
- College
- Employment

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[1]: Protocol reference
Data and Research Review

The CSIP Planning Committee engaged in a multi-session data and research walk, which was structured to make connections between particular categories of outcome data and the research-informed factors that positively impact those outcomes. Research on contributing factors, effective strategies, and population-specific considerations for improving student outcomes were explored in connection to the District data reviewed. Staff insights also provided a greater understanding of why potential challenges may exist and possible approaches to creating sustainable change. In total, the following number of sources were considered throughout the planning process:

- 31 District data sources/reports (quantitative)
- 22 Voice of Customer sources (qualitative)[2]
- 57 Research studies/resources

Insight Statements

Based on the information gathered in the data and research reviews, several key points emerged and were thematically grouped to guide goal and strategy development:

- Creating a common understanding (re: purpose and process)
- Improving student outcomes
- Ensuring continuity across settings

Root Cause Analysis

A root cause analysis (5 whys exercise) was conducted for each goal area highlighting the supports, processes, and solutions needed to spur change as suggested by the research, data, and staff feedback gathered to-date. The identified elements became the CSIP strategies listed under each goal area.

[1] The Strategic and Responsive Solutions (SRS) Protocol provides a structured process where staff explore three different types of evidence (i.e., data, voice of customer, research) to learn the root of an issue before proposing a solution.

[2] Including surveys, focus groups, interviews from program evaluations, needs assessments, Gibson Operational Audit, and Missouri Quality Award review.
Comprehensive School Improvement Plan Overview

Systems Frame
Once the CSIP strategies were confirmed, a systems frame was developed for each team as a means of identifying the stakeholders connected to the strategy's focus and who are therefore serving as an important voice in bringing the solution to life. Completing systems frames at the strategy level also helped diversify representation across teams by ensuring the same individuals (where possible) were not assigned to multiple teams.

Theory of Change
Once the strategy teams were formed, they were tasked with completing a theory of change which explains:

- The challenge they are addressing
- The work their committee will complete (actions to be taken, deliverables),
- The changes they expect to see as a result of their efforts (short and long-term outcomes); and,
- The stakeholders that need to be involved in order for their project to be a success.

These visioning documents will help align districtwide projects at both the CSIP and strategic plan–level and will help promote opportunities for collaboration. Furthermore, SSD staff will gain a better awareness and understanding of the improvement efforts that are underway.

Reporting and Monitoring Process
A plan was developed for the teams to report quarterly on the status of strategies and goals. This report is shared with the District Leadership Team, the Board of Education, and the Governing Council. Based on these reports and ongoing data collection, work plans will undergo a cycle of improvement, if needed, based on milestone attainment and performance outcomes.
Based on the outlined process, the team prioritized the following District goal areas:

**GOAL 1: Proactively plan for student success.**

There is a wealth of information on factors that contribute to successful outcomes for students. Drawing on this evidence-base, the District will clearly define more meaningful understandings of post-school success, as well as shape and introduce the necessary collaborative planning and data-informed work processes/tools needed to maximize the positive effects of these influential factors.

**GOAL 2: Align and coordinate decision-making to provide student supports that are consistent with the District’s mission.**

SSD is proud of the wide range of services and supports it offers, and the ways in which those offerings can be tailored to the needs of students. However, without a shared understanding of the driving motivation for the use of particular interventions, services, and supports, the way in which they are assigned may unintentionally counteract plans provided by complementary service providers; or the District’s ultimate goals for student success (e.g., assigning 1:1 adult support to promote student independence, pulling students out of class for interventions while subscribing to an inclusive education model). Furthermore, the degree to which programming decisions are evidence-based and rely on common data sources will also need to be explored.

**GOAL 3: Create learning environments and systems that are responsive to the experiences of highly mobile students, their families, and the staff who serve them.**

We need to better understand mobility trends and the associated student experience in order to provide greater continuity of service/instruction for highly mobile students. Based on that understanding, SSD will focus on working with partners to develop a solution that builds a network of consistent instruction/supports/systems for students who experience school changes. Trauma-informed approaches will also be an important consideration in this work, as youth receiving foster care services typically experience more than seven placements, resulting in at least eight school changes, over an average of 6.6 years.
CSIP Goals and Strategies - Goal 1

GOAL 1: SSD will proactively plan for student success by implementing evidence-based strategies resulting, in increased student achievement by 2027.

STRATEGY 1.1: Prepare students with the skills and planning needed for positive post-school or program outcomes.

STRATEGY CHAMPION: Dr. Tami Yates, Assistant Executive Director of Partner Districts and Casey Wisdom, Director of Transition Services

RATIONALE: There is a disconnect between compliant transition plans and ultimately achieving favorable post-secondary outcomes. An SSD data review found that 97% of transition plans are compliant. Yet over 90% of SSD graduates are not meeting Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) standards, and only 62% of students with disabilities attending partner district schools met positive post-secondary outcome criteria.

A research study by Miller-Warren (2015) found that transition planning that is designed to meet compliance requirements often tends to be ‘cookie cutter’ and does not properly prepare students for post-secondary success.[i]

Note: Almost 1/3 of SSD graduates’ post-graduate outcomes are unknown (2019 cohort data).

Research-based strategies for implementation:
• Define the standards for post-school success
• Focus on student-centered planning
• Engage in futures’ planning (conversations/use of facilitating tools)
• Start transition planning early
• Improve post-graduation follow-up rates

MEASURES:
Short-term
Products: Standards for post-school success; evidence of transition planning in IEPs
Activities: Rate of utilization of planning tools; post-secondary follow up rates

Long-term
Increase of positive post-secondary placement

FUNDING SOURCE: Standard operating budget

ALIGNMENT:
MSIP Standard: Student Success: TL1, TL3, TL4, TL6, TL8, CC3, CC4, DB2, DB4, EA2, EA3, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2
Equity Framework: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
STRATEGY 1.2: Improve connections between student data and research-based factors influencing student achievement, to support proactive planning.

STRATEGY CHAMPION: Alan Wheat, Executive Director of Student Services

RATIONALE: During the CSIP planning process, in areas where student outcomes needed to improve, a research review brought to light formative moments in time where a students' experience or proficiency-level in a particular content matter is likely to be indicative of their long-term outcomes.

With that in mind, the District recognized the need to proactively plan around these influential indicators, but in doing so would first need to develop the data monitoring system to support the work.

Research-based strategies for implementation:
• Make connections between factors associated with successful outcomes for students and the data collected
• Determine how it will be used to inform planning
• Data-based conversations with partner districts including early warning indicators

MEASURES:
Short-term
Products: Predictive factors identified with data sources; process for utilizing data for planning; process for data based conversations

Long-term
Increased graduation rates; increased growth and achievement scores/rates; positive post-secondary placements

FUNDING SOURCE: Standard operating budget

ALIGNMENT: MSIP Standard: Success Ready Students: TL1, TL4, TL5, TL6, TL7 TL8, CC3, DB1, EA2, EA3, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2
Equity Framework: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
**STRATEGY 1.3:** Engage in collaborative planning with partners.

**STRATEGY CHAMPION:** Chaketa Mack-Riddle, Executive Director of Partner Districts

**RATIONALE:** Research studies have shown that work completed with general education staff in partnership with, and/or reinforced by special education staff can create the sustainable upstream prevention mechanisms needed to impact special education students’ school experience via referrals/diagnoses, discipline, and academics.

Currently, conversations with partner districts tend to be more focused on a division of responsibilities rather than collaborative ways to support students.

Research-based strategies for implementation:
- Co-develop productive collaborative planning practices with partner districts
- Co-develop integrated data-informed work processes with partner districts

**MEASURES:**

**Short-term**
Products: Partnership agreements
Activities: Implementation of the process for data-based conversations (see 1.2); number of data-based conversations occurring with each partner district

**Long-term**
Increased graduation rates; increased growth and achievement scores/rates; positive post-secondary placements; increase in student placements in the least restrictive environments

**FUNDING SOURCE:** Standard operating budget

**ALIGNMENT:**
MSIP Standard: Success Ready Students: TL1, TL3, TL4, TL5, TL6, TL7, TL8, TL9, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, DB2, DB4, AS1, AS2, EA1, EA2, EA3, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2
Equity Framework: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Goal 2: SSD will align and coordinate decision-making to provide student supports that are consistent with the District’s mission by 2027, resulting in increased student growth, achievement, and placement in the least restrictive environments (LREs).

STRATEGY 2.1: Develop a shared understanding of the purpose that provides clarity for programming decisions pursued across teams (i.e., districtwide, service provider disciplines).

STRATEGY CHAMPION: Dr. Kelly Grigsby, Executive Director of SSD Schools and Programs

RATIONALE: All staff categories expressed the need for greater consistency in the availability/access to services, staffing, and decisions made across buildings/districts.[ii] Significant variances across the county in minutes/supports prescribed not only demonstrate regional inconsistencies, but also highlight decision-making that does not align with the District’s guiding principles (e.g., inclusion, student independence).

Furthermore, a recent SSD program evaluation found that “perceived barriers to inter/multidisciplinary collaboration have resulted in the simultaneous development of plans targeting the same goal, without providers necessarily communicating those plans to each other and/or subsequently aligning them.” [iii]

Research-based strategies for implementation:
- Identify a common set of intentions for the district
- Ensure the type and level of support assigned to students align with the District’s identified intentions
- Facilitate greater coordination across service providers to prevent programming in silos and competing directives

MEASURES:
Short-term
Products: Philosophy statement
Activities: Programming audit of the process used for placement and instructional decisions

Long-term
Increased graduation rates; increased growth and achievement scores/rates; positive post-secondary placements; increase in student placements in least restrictive environments

FUNDING SOURCE: Standard operating budget

ALIGNMENT:
MSIP Standard: Success Ready Students: TL1, TL6, TL7, TL8, TL9, CC CC2, CC3, CC4, DB2, DB3, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 2.2, 3.2
Equity Framework: 1, 2, 5, 6
STRATEGY 2.2: Ensure programming decisions are grounded in evidence-based practices.

STRATEGY CHAMPION: Dr. Mollie Bolton, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability

RATIONALE: Prior to 2020–21 school year, SSD had no centralized purchasing of research-based programs. Programming and strategy selection had fallen to administrators to approve, without much district-level guidance or oversight. While an SSD-developed research-based practices selection framework exists, initial feedback and online views suggest that the tool is not regularly accessed in making methodology decisions and/or purchasing materials.

Furthermore, different datasets are being used to make case-by-case decisions, which often leads to inconsistent approaches and inequitable access to programming.

Research-based strategies for implementation:
• Establish common data sources for program decision-making
• Address the degree to which practices in place are evidence-based/research-based

MEASURES:
Short-term
Products: Identify common data sources
Activities: Instructional audit of evidence-based/research-based practices; data analysis of practices being used currently

Long-term
Increased graduation rates; increased growth and achievement scores/rates

FUNDING SOURCE: Standard operating budget

ALIGNMENT:
MSIP Standard: Success Ready Students: TL1, TL3, TL4, TL5, TL6, TL7, TL8, CC1, CC2, CC4, DB2, AS1, AS2, EA1, EA2, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2
Equity Framework Alignment: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
GOAL 3: SSD will create learning environments and systems that are responsive to the experiences of highly mobile students, their families, and the staff who serve them, which will lead to their increased academic outcomes, graduation, and post-secondary rates by 2027.

STRATEGY 3.1: Provide strong continuity of service/instruction for students experiencing school changes.

STRATEGY CHAMPION: Kevin Andert, Executive Director of Career Technical Education and College and Career Readiness

RATIONALE: Approximately 1/3 of partner districts have more than 20% of their student population experiencing a relocation during a single calendar year. Students with disabilities in these districts have outcomes significantly below target in math, ELA, graduation, post-secondary outcomes, and have a greater proportion of students attending SSD separate schools.

Not only does student mobility, more than risk factors associated with poverty\[iv\], create an irreparable achievement gap between mobile and non-mobile students (Isernhagen, J.C, & Bulkin, 2011; NEPC, 2015), “higher student mobility in schools [has] a dramatic negative impact on the achievement of all students in the school.”[v]

Research-based strategies for implementation:
- Understand patterns of school changes among students receiving SSD services/supports
- Understand the experience of mobile students and the staff that support them
- Work with partner districts to develop a solution that builds a network of consistent instruction/supports for students who experience school changes

MEASURES:
Short-term
Products: Solutions addressing negative impacts of mobility rates

Long-term
Increased graduation rates; increased growth and achievement scores/rates; positive post-secondary placements; increase in student placements in the least restrictive environments

FUNDING SOURCE: Standard operating budget

ALIGNMENT:
MSIP Standard: Success Ready Students: TL1, TL3, TL4, TL5, TL7, TL8, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, EA2, EA3, EA4
Strategic Plan: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2
Equity Framework Alignment: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8

[ii] (Engagement Survey, 2020)  [v] (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2010)
[iii] (ABA evaluation, 2021)
Thank you to the following individuals for dedicating their time and talents to the updated comprehensive school improvement plan.

CSIP Committee

Kevin Andert  
Executive Director of Career and Technical Education & College and Career Readiness

Dr. Paul Bauer  
Consultant

Dr. Mollie Bolton  
Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability

Ben Gleason  
Partner District Coordinator, Maplewood-Richmond Heights School District

Dr. Kelly Grigsby  
Executive Director of SSD Schools and Programs

Lisa Leonard–Sneed  
Principal, Ackerman School

Chaketa Mack-Riddle  
Executive Director of Partner Districts

Wendi Pendergrass  
Chief Academic Officer

Karla Reichert  
Evaluation and Research Associate

Dr. Matthew Traughber  
Evaluation and Research Administrator

Alan Wheat  
Executive Director of Student Services
SSD 2022-23 Organizational Chart

Mission: To support and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential.

Vision: All students realize their full potential in life and learning.

Values: Equity • Commitment • Collaboration

Chief Academic Officer of SSD Schools and Academic Programming
Wendi Pendergrass

SSD Rolling Strategic Plan and Comprehensive

Executive Director of Schools and Programs - Dr. Kelly Grigsby

Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability - Dr. Mollie Bolton

Executive Director of Student Services - Alan Wheat

Exec. Dir. of Career Technical Education and College & Career Readiness - Kevin Andert

Executive Director of Partner Districts - Dr. Tami Yates

Elementary and Secondary Schools
English Language (EL) Programs
Federal Programs
Homebound
Special Non-public Access Program (SNAP)
Vocational Skills and Transition Services

Curriculum / Professional Development
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Programming
- Curriculum
- Literacy Programming
- Math Programming
- Social Emotional/ Behavior Programming

Evaluation and Research
Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

Student Services:
- Adaptive PE
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- School Psychology
- Social Work
- Speech/Language

Assistive Technology
Augmentative Communication
Educational Surrogates
Instructional Resource Center
Music Therapy
Student Intake
Student Records

Admissions
Adult Education
Board Policies
Career and Technical Education Assessments
CCR and CTE Programs
Student Information Systems (SIS)

Audiology
Early Childhood Special Education
Low Incidence
Partner District Programming
Special Olympics
Special School District does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation against an individual based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, veteran status, age, genetic information, any other characteristic protected by law or activity protected by federal or state law in its programs, activities, and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, or any other youth groups designated by law.

Direct inquiries and complaints under this policy to:

**Student Matters:** Compliance Liaison
Special School District
12110 Clayton Road
St. Louis, MO 63131
314.989.8100 (telephone)

**Employee or Visitor Matters:** Chief People and Culture Officer
Special School District
12110 Clayton Road
St. Louis, MO 63131
314.989.8100 (telephone)
- or -
U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
One Petticoat Lane
1010 Walnut Street
3rd Floor, Suite 320
Kansas City, MO 64106
816.268.0550 (telephone)
816.268.0599 (fax)
800.877.8339 (TDD)
OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov

Information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities accessible to impaired persons can be obtained from the Special School District’s Director – Compliance Liaison (Student Matters) or the Chief of People and Culture (Employee or Visitor Issues) at the phone number and address listed above.