



Standard Program and Service Evaluation

(Board of Education Approved on June 1, 2004)

Program Evaluation Question(s) (Revised 10/19/2004)

1. What is the level of satisfaction with visual impairment/blindness services provided by SSD?
2. Are appropriate assistive technology devices and services utilized for each student with a visual impairment/blindness giving effective access to the school program?

I. Program/Service Information

Name of Program or Services: Visual Impairment/Blindness

Personnel Responsible for Evaluation:

Betty Davidson, Ph.D., Area Coordinator of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program

Date of Evaluation: January, 2005 – June, 2005

Goal/Objective of Program/Services: To provide students optimal vision services by:

- Providing a wide variety of individualized educational programming and support services for children and adolescents with visual impairments/blindness designed to ensure each student's successful contribution to our community.
- Developing effective relationships with parents, teachers/staff and students.
- Ensuring staff maintains knowledge of current practices, procedures and assistive technology in the field of vision and each student benefits from appropriate and current educational technology and adaptive devices.

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

The CSIP plan for the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program supports reading and writing for both print and Braille users in order to improve literacy. The evaluation of CSIP goals provides information in order to adjust the curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of the students. (MSIP goal 6.3 – effective



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instructional programs.) Instructional resources/equipment such as Braille books and vision technology are integral to the program goal and support the MSIP goal 6.4 – instructional resources/equipment.

Demographic Description of Program:

Location(s):

Students are served in St. Louis countywide in 23 local St. Louis County districts.

Special School District (SSD) serves 176 students with visual impairments/blindness in education programs. These students live within the 23 local St. Louis County districts. SSD directly serves 100 students and serves 76 students through the consult model in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program. Of the 176 students, a total of 39 students are served in Special School District buildings and 137 are in district programs. In addition, SSD is responsible for 22 students who are served at Missouri School for the Blind and live within the 23 local St. Louis County districts. Of the total of 176 students served by SSD staff, 30 are students with blindness and may use Braille as their reading mode, and the remaining 146 students have visual impairments (from 20/70 to 20/200).

Number of staff:

- 12.25 visual impairment teachers
- 2.25 orientation and mobility instructors (O&M)
- 11 visual impairment paraeducator
- 1 area coordinator
- 1 secretary

Participants: Parents, staff, teachers, and students of St. Louis County resident students ages birth – 21 who have an educational diagnosis of visual impairment/blindness and are eligible for direct vision services as determined through the IEP process. Students who have an educational diagnosis of visual impairment/blindness and demonstrate the need for the related direct service of orientation and mobility training (the knowledge of body image, concepts, and gross motor skills for cane and travel skills). Students who are seen only on a consult basis and students at the Missouri School for the Blind were not participants in this evaluation.



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Length of program/service: The program serves students ages 3 – 21 years of age as prescribed in their IEPs. The services are implemented during the regular school year calendar and during the ESY programs.

II. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation:

Parent engagement activities:

Meeting on February 1, 2005

Parent forum/focus meeting on April 20, 2005

Parent participants:

Robin Loevy, Parkway School District

Dr. Lynette Lui, Optometrist, Rockwood School District

Amy von Gontard, Ladue School District

Dr. Joseph Sartorius, Director for Special Needs , Lindbergh School District, and parent

Community engagement activities: Meeting on February 1, 2005

Community members:

Dave Ekin, President and CEO of St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Linda Van Eck, retired Outreach Director at the Missouri School for the Blind

SSD staff engagement activities:

Meeting on February 1, 2005

Parent forum/focus meeting on April 20, 2005

SSD staff:

Participants

Margaret Backus, Special School District (SSD) paraeducator for the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program

Jim Baker, retired SSD area coordinator of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program

Dr. Betty Davidson, chair, SSD area coordinator of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program

Lisa Mouldon, SSD ABA coordinator

Chris Montgomery, SSD Director of Special Education, Region 3

Barb Mossinghoff, SSD effective practice specialist

Greg Savel, SSD Orientation and Mobility instructor

Jeff Schneider, SSD effective practice specialist



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Shelly Smith, SSD teacher for the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program
Diane Stockman, SSD teacher for the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program

Student engagement activities:

Telephone survey the week of May 16 - 19

Students:

Surveyed 15 students on the telephone

Partner district staff engagement activities:

Meeting on February 1, 2005

Partner district staff:

Dr. Joseph Sartorius, Director for Special Needs , Lindbergh School District

III. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered

- √ Staff perception survey
- √ Parent perception survey
- √ Assessment statistics
- √ Student attitude and interest survey
- √ Perception data

IV. Data Collection Methodology: Visual Impairment (VI)

Data was collected on the level of satisfaction with visual impairment/blindness services provided by SSD. This included the satisfaction with assistive technology devices and services utilized for each student with a visual impairment/blindness.

1. The March 2005 survey of parents/guardians of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program included 17 Lickert questions, including 2 questions on assistive technology, and 1 open question for comments. A total of 35 surveys were received out of 100 surveys distributed and that was a 35% return rate.
2. The March 2005 survey of classroom staff/general education staff of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program included 11 Lickert questions, including 2 questions on assistive technology, and 1 open question for comments. A total of 94 surveys were received out of 123 surveys distributed and that was a 76% return rate.



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3. The March 2005 survey of parents/guardians of students served directly in the Orientation and Mobility Program included 12 Likert questions, including a question on assistive devices, and 1 open question for comments. A total of 16 surveys were received out of 26 surveys distributed and that was a 62% return rate.
4. The March 2005 survey of classroom staff/general education staff of students who are directly served in the Orientation and Mobility Program included 8 Likert questions, including a question on assistive devices, and 1 open question for comments. A total of 35 surveys were received out of 45 surveys distributed and that was a 78% return rate.
5. The survey of teachers in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program (including orientation and mobility instructors) included those at the focus meeting who gave written open-ended survey comments to one question on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey (this was a self-assessment). A total of 12 surveys were completed on April 20, 2005 and that was a response rate of 100%.
6. The survey of visual impairment students in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program included 4 open questions for comments. Jim Baker completed 12 telephone surveys the week of May 16, 2005 and that was a 100% return rate. (Students were chosen for the interview by their teachers on their ability to articulate their answers to questions on the phone.)

V. Results

Time spent on program evaluation: 188 hours

Strengths of program/service:

Strengths of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program were determined by responses to Likert questions and open-ended comments to questions. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, scores above 4.0 were considered satisfactory and above 3.0 were considered above average. All comments were summarized and the strength comments that were most often reported were listed under strength comments.



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The numbered items below represent strengths of each of the six groups surveyed within the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

1. Parents/guardians of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Results of the 35 parent/guardian surveys of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program reveal an overall high level of satisfaction with the vision services provided by Special School District. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, the average of all of the parent responses resulted in a total of 4.6. The most favorably rated items had an average score of 4.8 and three items had this highest rating:

- teacher response to questions and comments
- accessibility and support of the area coordinator
- support by the teacher aide

Parents/guardians rated two questions on assistive technology. They rated 4.5 on the child has the appropriate adaptive devices and support to use the device and 4.4 on the child uses the adaptive devices.

The strength comments by the parents/guardians on the surveys indicated that the teachers in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program were extremely helpful, nurturing, devoted, knowledgeable, they plan ahead, and they have an excellent rapport with other team members.

2. Classroom staff/general education district staff of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Results of the 94 district staff surveys of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program reveal an overall high rate of satisfaction with the vision services provided by Special School District. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, the average of all of the district staff responses resulted in a total of 4.6. The most favorably rated item had an average score of 4.7 and two items had this highest rating:

- teacher response to questions and comments
- receiving material promptly from the vision teacher



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District staff rated two items on assistive technology. They rated 4.6 on the student has the appropriate adaptive devices and support to use the device and 4.5 on the student uses the adaptive devices.

The strength comments by the district staff on the surveys: District staff said the teachers in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program were creative, resourceful, excellent in communication, and they quickly supplied Brailled materials when needed.

3. Parents/guardians of students who are served directly in the Orientation and Mobility Program:

Results of the 16 parent/guardian surveys of the Orientation and Mobility Program reveal an overall high rate of satisfaction with the orientation services provided by Special School District. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, the average of all of the parent responses resulted in a total of 4.8. The most favorably rated item had an average perfect score of 5.0: orientation and mobility (O&M) instructor's response to the parent's questions and comments.

Parents/guardians rated 4.8 on the one question on assistive technology:

- student receives O&M devices promptly from the O&M instructor

The strength comments by the parents/guardians on the surveys indicated that the instructors encourage independence, are very professional, and are caring instructors.

4. Classroom staff/general education district staff of students who are served directly in the Orientation and Mobility Program:

Results of the 35 classroom staff/general education district staff surveys of the Orientation and Mobility Program reveal an overall high rate of satisfaction with the orientation and mobility services provided by Special School District. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, the average of all of the parent responses resulted in a total of 4.7. The most favorably rated item had an average score of 4.8 and two questions had this high rating:

- student's impairment was considered to ensure safety in school
- student's impairment was considered to ensure safety in the community



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District staff rated 4.7 on the one item on assistive technology:

- student receives O&M devices promptly from the O&M instructor

The strength comments by the district staff on the surveys indicated that O&M instructors encourage independence, they are professional, and they have excellent suggestions in the preparation of materials.

5. Teachers in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Results of the 12 vision teachers' surveys, including orientation mobility instructors and those at the focus meeting on April 20, 2005, reveal an overall high level of satisfaction with the vision services provided by Special School District.

The strength comments by the visual impairment teachers on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey: Teachers of students who are visually impaired/blind (including orientation and mobility instructors) said that the staff (their peers) communicated well, were knowledgeable, excellent at evaluating and identifying problems with visually impaired students, and are very competent.

6. Students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Results of the 12 students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program reveal an overall high rate of satisfaction with the vision services provided by Special School District.

The strength comments by the students on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey: Students who are visually impaired/blind said that the vision teachers were very supportive and put their student needs first. They prepare materials in a timely manner and they assist in planning out long-range projects. They help with college applications and teach us independence.

Concerns regarding program/service:

Concerns of the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program were determined by responses to Likert questions and open-ended comments to questions. On a five (5-high) point rating scale, scores above 4.0 were considered satisfactory and



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above 3.0 were considered above average. All of the scores were in the above average range; however, the lowest responses on each test were considered concerns. All comments were summarized and the comments that were most often reported as concerns were listed under concerns/comments.

The numbered items below represent the six groups surveyed within the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

1. Parents/guardians of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Even though it is still in the strength range, the lowest average response was 4.2 and two items had this rating:

- informing the parent about their child's progress on a regular basis
- progress reports on IEP goals

Parents' concerns as expressed on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey: Data indicates a need to provide information on the student's daily progress as well as the formal progress reports need to be sent to the parents similar to the formal report of the student's peers.

2. Classroom staff/general education district staff of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

Even though it is still in the strength range, the lowest average response of an item was 4.4:

- the amount of service time from the vision itinerant meets the needs of the student

The concerns/comments by the local district staff on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey: Districts would like brailled materials sooner, missed time made up, and better communication among team players. Data indicates that district staff desires more time for services.



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3. Parents/guardians of students who are served directly in the Orientation and Mobility Program:

The lowest average response of an item was 4.6:

- the amount of service time by the Orientation and Mobility itinerant meets the needs of the student.

This is very high and cannot be considered a concern.

The concerns/comments by the parents on the Orientation and Mobility Program Survey: Parents were very positive and the data did not indicate significant needs.

4. Classroom staff/general education district staff of students who are served directly in the Orientation and Mobility Program:

The lowest average response of an item was 4.6 and four items had his rating:

- appropriateness of the IEP
- O&M instructor's knowledge of community resources and shared this information with the staff
- amount of O&M services
- O&M's helping with transition from grades and schools

This is very high and cannot be considered a concern.

The concerns/comments by the district staff on the Orientation and Mobility Program Survey: None of the comments were significant concerns.

5. Teachers in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program of students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

The concerns/comments by the visual impairment teachers on the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program Survey: Teachers of students with visual impairments would like better communication with the general education teachers as they don't understand the role of the itinerant teacher or paraeducator. So much paperwork is stressful and the accessibility of materials and the ability to copy large print is difficult due to the availability of paraeducators and the availability of the copy machines in the local districts. More assistance is needed with activities of daily living skills, as



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some students do not get training at home to prepare them for transition/post graduation. Students need to learn self-determination skills and social skills.

6. Students who are served directly in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program:

The concerns/comments by the students who are visually impaired/blind on the program survey: Students with visual impairments would like the technology upgraded, more novels on tape, and more large print books for home use.

Summary

The most significant concerns of parents, staff, teachers of the visually impaired, and orientation mobility instructors is:

1. The need for increased informal sharing of daily progress with parents as well as reporting progress on the formal progress reports that are similar to that of their non-disabled peers.
2. The need to improve communication with general education teachers to help them understand the role of the itinerant teacher or paraeducator and the impairment of the student.
3. Some students are not taught activities of daily living, self-determination, and social skills at home and parents and students need help from the program.
4. Technology needs to be upgraded and improved, more novels need to be on tape, and students with large books need assistance.

Recommendations regarding program/service:

1. Improve sharing of daily progress of students as well as the method of reporting on the formal progress reports with parents that is similar to that of their non-disabled peers.
2. Improve communication with the district general education staff to assist them in understanding the role of the itinerant teacher or paraeducator and the impact of the disability on the student.



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3. For students who need activities of daily living, self-determination, and social skills, educate the parents and the students and explore the feasibility of programs to teach daily living skills outside of the normal school setting.
 4. Update and improve technology. For example, we need the newer version of Jaws. Improve the method of quickly producing books and adapting materials in Braille and large print. Secure more novels on tape and investigate the feasibility of providing backup books for students at home.

VI. Action Plan for Recommendations as A Result of Program Evaluation

See attached Action Plans.

Person responsible to champion action plan:

Betty Davidson, Ph.D.

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education:

Share results with staff working in the Visual Impairment/Blindness Program on August 15, 2005. The review of the action plan will be ongoing and on 12/15/05 and 6/30/06.

Date: 6/21/2005

Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation