



Special School District

At-Risk Programs Program Evaluation

Special Education Schools, Court Program and Bridges

Paul Bauer, Chair

Board : May 24, 2011



At-Risk Programs

Special Education Schools, Court Program and Bridges

Standard Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

As required by the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) standards, school districts must evaluate At-Risk Programs biennially. The question approved by the Board of Education for the present program evaluation was as follows: *What is the nature of at-risk programs and how do they impact student outcomes?* The present evaluation includes a review of services provided in the Bridges program. Based on stakeholder review of the data, strengths, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations are noted.

Results

Strengths

- Bridges provides an educational setting to students who otherwise would be excluded from school or receiving their education via Homebound services
- The number credits students earned via PLATO has increased this year.
- Formative assessments of writing, reading, and math show improved student achievement
- Attendance rate is improving each year
- The number of students projected to move to LRE has increased over last year.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The numbers of incidents and days of out-of-school suspensions has increased over two years ago, and is on pace to approach last year's numbers. This adversely affects student attendance.
- Formative and summative data show inconsistent patterns of improvement. In some cases, only half or fewer of students have shown progress this year. Low numbers preclude meaningful statistical analysis.

Recommendations

- Expand use of PLATO software for students in all grades
- Investigate use of targeted remedial Reading and Math instruction to improve student performance
- Investigate creative scheduling, outside supports to families and students, and other ways to improve student attendance
- Investigate the use of other approaches to improving student behavior to decrease incidents of out-of-school suspension.



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Program Evaluation Question(s)

What is the nature of at-risk programs and how do they impact student outcomes?

I. Program/Service Information

1. Name of Program or Services:
At-Risk Programs

2. Personnel Responsible for Evaluation and Program (list):
Paul Bauer

3. Demographic Description of Program:
Location(s): One
Number of staff – 10.7 Full-Time Equivalence (Includes two part-time staff)
Participants – 16 as of March 1, 2011
Length of program/service: Ongoing

4. Date of Evaluation (Year/Duration):
August 2010 – March 2011

5. Goal/Objective of Program/Services:
The purpose of the at-risk programs in the special education schools is to provide students supports to progress toward graduation, to return to their home schools if appropriate, and to achieve their post-secondary goals.

6. Brief description of relationship between program goals, CSIP and MSIP Standards:
MSIP 6.3.4: The district has implemented effective instructional programs designed to meet the assessed needs of its students, as well as the practices and procedures needed to support these programs. The district identifies and provides targeted instruction or other needed services/interventions for educationally-disadvantaged, ESOL, migrant, and homeless students, as well as students who may, for other reasons, be at risk of leaving school without completing high school.
Goal I: Student Performance: Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals.



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II. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered

- Achievement assessment data
- Enrollment data
- Attendance rate
- Dropout rate
- Suspension rate
- Movement to LRE

III. Description of Stakeholders Engagement in Program Evaluation:

Name	Role
Paul Bauer	Director
Wendi Pendergrass	Principal, Bridges Program
Karen Walsh	Effective Practices Specialist
Randy Barnes	Program Evaluation

IV. Results

Services Provided to All Students

According to the DESE Career Education office, an “at-risk” student is one who is currently enrolled in school, identified as a potential dropout and experiencing difficulty with:

- Academics
- Discipline
- Social conditions
- Economic conditions
- Other areas that relate to a student’s ability to become a productive member of the workforce after graduation

The students who attend the SSD special education schools all have a disability. In addition, they can receive special education and related services appropriate for their needs only in a separate school. Thus, these students present many of the above characteristics. As a result, the special education schools program for these students in a variety of ways through special education instruction and services provided in special education schools. These programs include:

- small class sizes
- individualized instruction
- school guidance and counseling
- social work



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- psychological counseling
- support to parents (individual and group meetings)
- computer-based instruction through PLATO and Orchard
- Title IA Reading services in eligible special education schools
- Title ID Reading services in courts programs
- consultation with the district's consulting psychiatrist
- consultation with the district's medical consultant
- crisis intervention
- Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Office or job program

In summary, the services that the district provides in separate special education schools are aimed at providing students the supports and teaching the skills they will need to succeed in school and after graduation. The effectiveness of the special education schools and Title programs is reported in other program evaluation reports to the Board of Education.

This report will focus on the participants of the Bridges Program.

Bridges Program

Description

In addition to the special education schools, SSD provides the Bridges program for students with many of the above 'at risk' characteristics. Bridges is an off-campus "store front" school for students in grades 7-12. These students are assigned to Bridges due to serious and repeated behavior incidents including fighting, bullying, verbal assaults, threats of harm to others, insubordination, physical aggression, and truancy. These students' special education placement is "public separate day school", determined via the IEP process.

Bridges implements SSD curricula for academic content areas but also adds social skills training, conflict resolution and aggression replacement training. The academic curriculum provides instruction in core content areas for students in grades 7-8 and high school credit for grades 9 through 12 through classroom instruction and through the PLATO software system.

Bridges has the following instructional staff:

1. One full-time guidance counselor (a) implements various programs aimed at preventing bullying or developing pro-active social skills, (b) provides individual and small group counseling to students, (c) communicates and collaborates with outside agencies, (d) assists students in developing long-range educational and career plans, and (e) serves on the



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school's crisis team. During the 2010-2011 school year, this position has been funded with federal ARRA funds.

2. Four classroom teachers and teacher assistants provide instruction in academic content areas as well as ongoing support to students to demonstrate appropriate social skills.
3. A half-time social worker provides social work services and psychological counseling to individuals and groups
4. .2 FTE nurse provides support to staff and students in health services and manages and delegates medications for students.

Student Outcomes

In reviewing outcome data for Bridges, the following should be noted:

1. Bridges has very low enrollment. During the entire 2010-11 school year, fewer than twenty students have been enrolled. During 2009-10, during only one month did enrollment reach as high as 25 students.
2. Bridges experiences a high turnover of students. For example, in 2009-10, 37 students entered the program at some time during the school year. Of those students, 17 were enrolled at the end of the school year.
3. Because of the low enrollment, data for one or two students can substantially affect group data.

These factors preclude meaningful quantitative analysis of data. The data are presented only to show possible trends: any test of significance or other statistical analysis is inappropriate.

Attendance

The attendance rate at Bridges has increased in each of the last three years. In 2008-09, the attendance rate was 74.86 percent. This increased to 75.0% in 2009-2010. For August 2010 through February 2011, the attendance rate was 80.46%



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Student Mobility

The following table shows enrollment status Bridges students in 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Enrollment Status Bridges Students

	Number of Students	
	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>
Entered Program During School Year	34	37
Transferred to other district (return to LRE)	4	4
Transferred to JDC	2	0
Transferred to other SSD School	0	1
Transferred to Homebound (Incarcerated)	0	1
Transferred to Homebound	0	3
Transferred to other district (residential)	1	0
In GED program*	0	2
Moved/not known to continue*	2	5
Dropped out, currently in hospital*	0	1
Dropped out, Incarcerated*	1	0
Dropped for non-attendance*	1	1
Dropped out, whereabouts unknown*	1	1
Graduated from program	1	0
Completed year of entry in Bridges	21	18
Total	34	37

Note: Items marked with * are counted in Core Data as “Drop-Out”.

These data show that ten of 37 students in the program in 2009-10, ten were coded as drop-outs. However, of those students, five moved without notifying the school and were not located – those students may be in some residential or educational program elsewhere. One was hospitalized at the end of the year, two entered a GED program elsewhere, one stopped coming to school and was dropped, and one was dropped by the school and could not be located. In other words, of the ten students dropped from the program in 2009-10, three were in some placement, five simply moved and could not be located, and two stopped coming to school and could not be located.



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Movement to LRE

Bridges is a restrictive special education placement in that students have no opportunity to participate in general education. The primary goal for students in the program is to ultimately return to a general education setting. One measure of the program’s success, therefore, is the number of students who move to a less restrictive environment. During both 2008-09 and 2009-2010, four students returned to a less restrictive educational environment after being successful at Bridges. From the beginning of the 2010-11 school year to March 31, 2011, five students had returned to their home schools full-time and one student part-time. At this pace, the number of students returning to the less restrictive environment is on track to exceed the totals in the two previous years.

Discipline

The table below shows the number of events leading to suspension and number of days of out-of-school suspension for 2008-09, 2009-10, and through February 2011.

Behavior Incidents and Days Suspended Out of School 2008 - Present			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Students Suspended</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>	<u>Number of Days</u>
2008-09	18	28	114
2009-10	24	66	144
2010-11 (As of March 1)	19	31	64

In reviewing the above data, it should be noted that the number of students is a duplicated count – it shows the number of students receiving suspensions, regardless of the number of time the student was suspended. Projecting the number of incidents to-date in 2010-11 to include the entire school year yields a projected total of 46 events and a projected 95 days of out-of-school suspension. While projected, these totals are less than in 2009-2010; the projected number of days is also lower than the number of days in 2008-09. Previous reports state that the numbers of incidents for 2006-07 and 2007-08 were 88 and 29, respectively.



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Achievement Data

PLATO/Credits: The PLATO system is an important part of the academic program at Bridges. By using this program, students are able to recover credits that they failed to earn in previous classes as well as earn additional credits to progress toward graduation. Student use of PLATO is shown below:

Student Progress

Year	PLATO System		Number of Students Completing Graduation Requirements
	Number of Students	Number of Credits Earned	
2008-09	6	5.0	0
2009-10	4	3.0	0
2010-11	6	7.5	1

(Through March 31)

The above data show that the use of PLATO for high school students helps them to successfully advance toward graduation. Without the ability to recover credits and earn additional credits, these students might be unable to earn sufficient credits to graduate before reaching age 21. In addition, the ability to recover and earn additional credits helps prevent those students who return to their home schools being behind their peers in advancing toward graduation.

Academic Progress: Students at Bridges complete formative assessments in Math and Reading, at the beginning of the school year and at the end of each quarter thereafter. The Orchard computer-based system generates Math and Reading assessments based on the standards tested on the GLA or EOC. They complete the WriteSource writing assessment in September, November, February, and May. These assessments are scheduled according to the WriteSource writing program, an assessment using a writing prompt is given in other months. Performance on these assessments as of the end of the third quarter of this school year follows. Because of turnover in students at Bridges, the tables show only scores for students who were in attendance for all assessments.



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WriteSource Assessments

Writing Area	Average Percent Correct		Percent Showing Improvement
	September	February	
Elements of Writing	24.4	38.9	66.7
Proofing and Editing	27.3	27.8	33.3

Orchard Assessments

Content Area	Average Percent Correct		Percent Showing Improvement
	Baseline	Third Quarter	
Reading	29.0	34.0	30.0
Math	22.5	23.5	50.0

The above data show that students, as a group who have been in the program for the entire year, show improvement in writing, reading, and math. However, this is affected by the performance of a few students: the percentage of students showing improvements in those areas varies from 30% to 66.7%.

Grade Level Assessments: Students typically exit the Bridges program after one year. Because of this and the relatively small enrollment, the number of test scores is very small each year (for example, seven students took the GLA in 2010), and a specific student's performance from year to year cannot be tracked. Students may show improvement in GLA performance, but the improvement may not be sufficient to raise their scores to the next highest level. To show changes in performance, three more sensitive scores, Scaled Score, Index Score, and Terra Nova Percentile, were used to show changes in group performance. A review of GLA scores follows:



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GLA/EOC Scores 2006 - 2010

Year	Content Area	Average Index Score	Average Scaled Score	Average Terra Nova
2006	Communication Arts	633	604.3	12.6
2007	Communication Arts	700	677.8	49.0
2008	Communication Arts	620	624.9	17.8
2009	Communication Arts	660	639.8	31.6
2010	Communication Arts	657	610.6	19.0
2006	Math	600	614.4	4.4
2007	Math	600	632.4	13.0
2008	Math	622	632.2	18.0
2009	Math	635	626.4	26.2
2010	Math	614	640.4	18.4

The above data show that, despite wide variation from year to year, average scores have generally increased over time. In both content areas, Index Scores, Scaled Scores, and Terra Nova scores are all higher than five years ago.

V. Summary

Strengths

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Recommendations

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Status of Previous Recommendations

The previous evaluation of at-risk programs contained two recommendations. These recommendations, and their current status of implementation, follow.

Recommendation: *Identify and implement a system of continuous formative assessments*

Status: In 2009-10, students started completing formative assessments using Orchard, and a monthly writing prompt to measure progress in writing. The district refined these assessments in 2010-11 so that students now take assessments, at their grade level in Reading and Math using Orchard, at the beginning of the school year and the end of each quarter. In addition, the district adopted the WriteSource writing program, which includes periodic formative writing assessments, in addition to the writing prompt given in other months. Staff use this information in data teams, to monitor student academic growth, and to plan instruction.

Recommendation: *Expand use of PLATO software for students in all grades*

Status: The number of students using PLATO at Bridges is the same as in 2008-09. However, the number of credits earned has increased, and one student completed graduation requirements via PLATO. Staff are engaging in discussions with PLATO representatives about how to best expand use of PLATO and accommodations so that students with low reading ability are able to complete assignments and earn credits.

Person responsible to champion action plan: Paul W. Bauer

Timeframe for reporting updates to Board of Education: Biennially

Date: _____

Signature of Administrator Responsible for Chairing Evaluation