



2015

MISSOURI QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENT

Special School District of St. Louis County

Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD) is a public school district established in 1957 to support the educational needs of children with disabilities. Today, SSD educates approximately 23,000 students with disabilities at sites throughout St. Louis County, Missouri, including in the 265 public schools operated by the other 22 public school districts in St. Louis County. SSD also provides career technical education (CTE) to about 2,000 area high school students at the District's two technical high schools. SSD's unique status as a public school district with its own tax base ensures that all students in St. Louis County receive equal access to quality special education services and career technical education regardless of their socio-economic background.

SSD provides special education services to students ages 3 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 to attendance at an SSD special education school or private separate agency. More than 97 percent of students who receive services from SSD staff attend a school in the school district in which they live. This means that the vast majority of special education services provided by SSD are delivered by SSD staff in 265 schools in 22 public school districts in St. Louis County.



SSD's two technical high schools offer more than 30 programs in a wide range of technical areas. Course offerings range from traditional technical fields, such as precision machining and construction, to such burgeoning fields as network administration and health sciences. Applications for career technical programs are accepted from all 10th through 12th grade students in St. Louis County.

SSD's special education services and career technical education are designed to ensure students' successful experience after graduation, an outcome that is vital to the success of the organization.

Mission, Vision, Values



The District's mission and values set the tone for why SSD exists and what is important to our organization. The vision captures the unique nature of the District not only to provide a quality education,

but to partner with other school districts in St. Louis County, parents and the community so that every student, regardless of innate or environmental advantages and challenges, can be successful. The first four core values of student success, collaboration, integrity and stewardship were adopted many years ago, and have been reaffirmed each year. After adopting the Baldrige criteria as the District's improvement and management model, the Board of Education added the core values of continuous improvement and equity to emphasize the importance of these two areas in fulfilling the District's mission.

Vision
Partners for every student's success
Mission
In collaboration with partner districts, we provide technical education and a wide variety of individualized educational and support services designed for each student's successful contribution to our community.
Core Values
Student Success Collaboration Integrity Stewardship Continuous Improvement Equity

Student-Centered Focus

SSD, guided by its mission, vision and values, is committed to improving the academic, social, emotional and pre-vocational skills of students by providing services that meet student requirements, while building relationships to gain their input and feedback.

To meet the unique needs of students, requirements include well-designed curriculum, highly skilled teachers, administrators and support staff, and access to community environments receptive to engaging students who may have learning, social or emotional challenges.



At SSD, the continuous improvement model has been implemented from the Boardroom to the classroom. A key method used to gain input and feedback from students is classroom learning systems in which students create a classroom mission statement that defines what they will do and how they will do it. Students then chart their progress toward classroom and individual goals and monitor this data through the use of the quality improvement model Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA).

Classrooms use the Plus/Delta/Rx quality tool to obtain immediate and actionable information from students to make adjustments on the quality of educational programs, instruction and the learning environment. Using this system of shared responsibility, accountability, shared decision-making, and problem solving empowers students to take control of their own learning.

Highly Skilled Staff

SSD's highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce provides research-based services based on students' needs. The District's 5,099 full-time employees, which include 2,618 teacher-level staff and 1,853 paraeducators, have a wide variety of specialized educational expertise.



In addition to classroom teachers, SSD's teacher-level staff include speech/language pathologists, facilitators and staff who provide services related to the student's IEP, such as physical and occupational therapy, and psychological and social work services.

SSD paraeducators perform such duties as assisting teachers and/or students in the classroom, providing interpreter services or working as health services aides. SSD also employs teachers with expertise in specific programs offered at the technical high schools.

Commitment to Excellence

SSD fosters an organizational culture characterized by an engaged workforce and high performance through staff commitment to District values embodied in the SSD Standards of Excellence. SSD's Standards of Excellence – what sets us apart – identifies the behavior characteristics associated with District values and exemplifies the behavioral expectations required to make the District's values come to life. Developed collaboratively with and embraced by SSD staff, the nine Standards of Excellence are incorporated into all aspects of our work as a District.

SSD Standards of Excellence
We believe all students can be successful.
We focus on each student's potential.
We value all people for their individual strengths.
We collaborate with parents, students, staff and stakeholders.
We respect the opinions of others.
We strive to continuously improve our performance.
We embrace our role as ambassadors for the District.
We take pride in our work.
We believe that what we do is more than just a job.

For More information:

Special School District St. Louis County
 Mary Ann Tietjens
 12110 Clayton Road
 Town & Country, MO 63131
 Telephone: 314-989-8379
 E-Mail: mtietjens@ssdmo.org
 Web Site: www.ssdmo.org



Telephone: 573-659-1234
 E-mail: Contact.us@excellenceinmo.org

If you are interested in learning more about how your organization can implement the Criteria for Performance Excellence please contact the Excellence in Missouri Foundation.