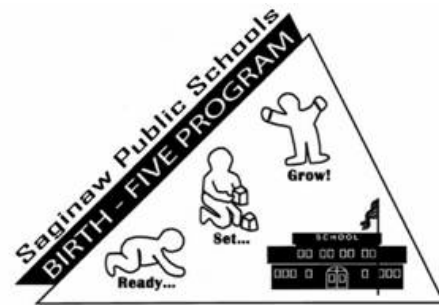


2010-2011 Annual Report

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF SAGINAW

Birth-Five Program

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About Our Program

We have several special programs or facets to the Birth to Five Program. Our focus is on visiting parents and their children in their home to assist the parent to become "teachers" to their children in hopes that they can gain confidence in being advocates in their child's education. The Reading is Fundamental grant has been an integral part of our program for at least 11 years. Since our B-5 focus is school readiness and promoting literacy, parents receive a book for their child at each home visit and also when we have special family event nights. We are the lead agency for the county B-5 effort in that we have a cooperative agreement with Covenant-Harrison Medical Center for our two Family Assessment Workers to visit the maternity floor 365 days per year to give B-5 information to new mothers. Approximately 80% of our referrals are generated by this contact. Families who do not live in the city of Saginaw, but elsewhere in Saginaw County, are referred to our partner agencies, Michigan State Extension Services and Teen Parent Services. Playgroups are also a special aspect to the B-5 Program. We run four to five playgroups a week during the school year and an abbreviated schedule in the summer. Parents attend these with their child with each playgroup being geared to an age range with appropriate activities. Parents from all over the county are welcome to attend. In addition, during the summer we have Kiddie Kamp, which is a two-week session in July and August for children who will be entering one of our Pre-Kindergarten classes in the fall. Children come for two hours a day without parents and the routine is based around that of our Pre-K classes.. The objective is for those children to become familiar with the structure of a classroom and to have a seamless transition into Pre-K in the fall, plus begin to accept being separated from their parents.

Showcasing Our Success

One of our most important successes this school year has been maintaining our numbers of involved parents and children. We currently have approximately 268 families and 366 children in our program and receive new referrals every day. Unlike our partner agencies who because of staff cuts have often put families on a waiting list, B-5 in Saginaw City has never had a waiting list. We service any family who is interested even if it means having staff overloads. We are a parents' very first contact with the Saginaw School District and we strive for it to be a positive experience.

Another positive accomplishment this years has been having several staff members trained in START, which is a state-wide effort to promote awareness about autism. The incidence of autism has greatly increased in the passed several years and we often have children who are involved in the B-5 program who have been identified as having Autism Spectrum Disorder. This training has given staff members a great amount of information about autism, in addition to practical strategies to use on home visits. We are the only one of our partnering agencies to take advantage of the training. Our staff has also completed Early On Training and can now utilize the Early Intervention Developmental Profile (EIDP) to write Individual Family Service Plans for children who show a 20% delays in skills. This is an effort to identify children with delays early so that more intensive work can be done with them thus eliminating the need for a special education referral.

Along with our partnering agencies we are involved in a Project Launch federal grant that will be used to enhance our existing B-5 efforts and specifically assist in developing a common data entry system to track the B-5 population. Some of this grant will also focus on outcomes and program assessment to evaluate program fidelity so that we can prove to Saginaw County that B-5 makes a difference in improving later school performance and reducing the incidence of special education.

Challenges

Though maintaining sufficient enrollment in the B-5 program is a success, keeping those families involved so that they realize the importance of home visits, is very challenging. Many of our families move often and have limited phone access and transportation difficulties. We strive to build lasting relationships with families but it is often very challenging. Lack of transportation also effects a parent's ability to take advantage of our free playgroups and attend family events in the evening. We always allocate a portion of our budget to be able to provide cab vouchers for the most needy families, but because of rising costs and dwindling resources this often is depleted quickly. We also have a need to update our technology as currently we have very old computers and will need to begin inputting data when we begin to convert to a common data system with our partners.

We use an informal assessment tool, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to help the parent to see which area their child is having difficulty with, if any. For children who may have a disability we either refer to Project Find or our parent educators receive support from one of our special education teachers to address the child's particular need. If we have a child who has Limited English Proficiency, we have in the past, received voluntary assistance from staff in our school district to help with the communication aspects. Since we go into parent's home we are always conscience of their economic status and ethnicity. Through our Project Launch partnership, we are hoping to be able to gather data to help us see to what extent these factors play into school achievement.

Technology

We use desktop and laptops computers to generate lesson plans and other forms that we use in our daily home visits. Because not all staff have working computers access to e-mail is often limited. We are finding that more parents have e-mail addresses even when they may not have regular working phones so this is a way to communicate with them. Our secretary's main desktop computer is outdated and we have a lot of difficulty inputting referrals into and pulling information out because of the antiquated data system. We are hopeful that in the future we have some new computers which would allow us to be more paperless because we could send referrals to different agencies via an interagency data system. Right now all of our referrals or contacts are either e-mail or paper copies sent by U.S. mail.

Parent Involvement

The Birth to Five Program is a parent involvement program. We use the Parents as Teachers Curriculum and all staff have been trained in this. The focus of PAT is to give parents the information and confidence to be their child's "first and best teacher." However, we still struggle with parents not being home for a scheduled visit, frequent moving and not taking advantage of play groups and family events. To keep parents as involved as possible we do many phone calls, send post cards and letters and also "drop bys" to try to track down transient parents. We also have delivered services at the Underground Railroad, Odyssey House and the Saginaw Rescue Mission. We will go wherever we can locate a parent!

Academic Core Curriculum

Academic core curriculum in Saginaw Schools is that set of essential academic learning that every student, K-12, is expected to know and do. Saginaw has adopted Standards for all academic content areas, for all students, and continues to develop and implement grade level benchmarks, assessments, and instructional techniques aligned with these standards.

Saginaw Schools offer all students a core academic curriculum aligned with National and State standards in history, geography, economics, science, mathematics, civics, and reading and writing.

The District continues to involve teachers at all levels in defining and refining the standards of these core areas. These standards, in addition to national standards, are directly tied to the District Mission and Graduate Standards. We recognize the need to continuously improve curriculum and to maintain a rigorous program of study for all students. Developing a core curriculum is a start not an end. Refining, managing and updating is a continuous job as we learn more about how students learn best and examine what all students need to know as they enter the world of work and continue their education.

Academic core curriculum documents in the areas noted above are available by contacting the office of Information Services at (989) 399-6630.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Education and the School District not to unlawfully discriminate on the basis of handicap, race, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, height or weight. The District reaffirms its policy to comply with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1998, and all other applicable Federal and State laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination.



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