GOAL 4 *CREATE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN A SELF-RENEWING ORGANIZATION*

MILESTONE All employees will be provided with high-quality professional development opportunities to promote individual and organizational effectiveness.

DATA ★ POINT

Supporting Services Professional Growth System Data

The Supporting Services Professional Growth System (SSPGS) recognizes the roles of supporting services employees as multifaceted, dynamic, and integral to supporting high-quality teaching and learning. The SSPGS establishes an infrastructure that describes the skills and knowledge required for supporting services employees to assist in building learning communities for students and staff. Similar to the professional growth systems for teachers and administrative and supervisory personnel, the purpose of the SSPGS is to institute a comprehensive system for recruiting, staffing, evaluating, developing, recognizing, and retaining high-quality supporting services employees in all of our schools and offices. The SSPGS clearly outlines employee expectations for the professional development and evaluation process. The professional growth system for supporting services employees includes the following:

- A competency-based professional development and evaluation plan for all supporting services staff
- Core competencies for each supporting services job classification
- Training and development programs aligned with the competencies
- A performance improvement process (PIP) through the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program
- Career ladder opportunities

Performance Improvement Process

One component of the SSPGS is the Performance Improvement Process (PIP), which provides underperforming supporting services employees with an opportunity to receive the intensive, individualized assistance and professional development necessary to improve job performance and meet the core competency criteria of the SSPGS. There are several options to address issues of underperformance, including a six-month Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program, a 90-day special evaluation, the opportunity for reassignment to a previously held position at which the employee was successful, and resignation.

Professional growth consultants (PGCs) coordinate and provide intensive, individualized support and resources to underperforming supporting services employees. Caseloads are dependent upon the number of supporting services employees not meeting one or more competency(ies) on a formal evaluation or based on a documented history of underperformance. Since 2006, PGCs have handled 357 referrals to PIP (Table MM-1). This number reflects the referrals from all schools and offices.

Table MM-1

Referrals to the Performance Improvement Process				
	2006	2008	2009	2010
Employees referred	72	83	66	71
Employees retained	59	65	61	66
Employees separated	13	18	5	5

Primarily, PGCs fulfill their roles of providing intensive, individualized support to underperforming supporting services employees. The intricate and complex nature of their work requires dedicated time to coordinate resources, provide support, monitor progress, and document professional growth for each client. Over the five-year implementation of the SSPGS, PGCs have spent an average of 72.3 hours for each client that has completed the six-month PAR program. PGCs embed the concepts and ideologies of the *MCPS Organizational Culture of Respect* and the *Framework for Equity and Excellence* in working with their clients. As noted in the *Framework for Equity and Excellence*, in order to maintain focus and momentum, measurements must be identified and employed to monitor system progress in promoting equity and excellence. In examining equitable workplace practices, cumulative referral data suggest that African American employees are referred at a disproportionate rate compared to colleagues of other races. However, retention and separation rates show small differences when compared by race which supports the equitable process PGCs execute with supporting services staff referred to PIP. In addition to providing support to clients, PGCs have provided over 31,000 hours of face-to-face training time to assist the professional development of supporting services employees and administrators/supervisors.

Professional Development Plans (PDPs) are mandatory for all supporting services employees. To assist employees and supervisors in the completion of PDPs, electronic, interactive tutorials were created and posted on the SSPGS website.

Administrative complaints filed by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500 related to the evaluation process have been significantly reduced since the implementation of the SSPGS. In the three years prior to the SSPGS, an average of 18 grievances were filed each year. Only one administrative complaint was filed over the past two years (Table MM-2).

Table MM-2

SEIU Administrative Complaints Related to the Evaluation Process				
	2002	2008	2009	2010
Complaints filed	27	9	0	1

Supporting Services Training and Development Program

The Supporting Services Training and Development (SSTD) program provides professional development experiences aligned with the seven core competencies identified in the SSPGS. Total attendance in these in-service trainings for 2010 was 3,821.

In 2010 there were several areas of particular focus: increasing the computer literacy level of all support professionals, providing English instruction to employees with limited English proficiency, enhancing the skills of our instructional data assistants (IDAs), and improving the management of school independent activity funds.

In 2010 we offered fewer face-to-face computer classes and delivered 16 computer training webinars. While reducing costs in transportation, training space, and time taken away from work, the webinars were highly rated by the participants. Ninety-eight percent of webinar participants say they would attend another webinar. The SSTD team, Office of Human Resources and Development (OHRD) staff, and the Technology Consulting team collaborated to pilot a new training model called Open Labs to assist supporting services staff who are beginner computer users while avoiding the cost of engaging outside training vendors. Two hundred forty-two participants learned to create their profiles in MCPS Careers at Open Labs.

The Workplace English program provides English instruction to MCPS employees with limited English proficiency. To date, 305 employees have participated in the Workplace English program since it began in 2008. Increasing the ability of staff to communicate clearly in English enhances student safety, improves customer service to the community, and enables employee professional growth, increasing eligibility for promotion.

The SSTD team collaborated with the Department of Technology Consulting and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer to provide training for IDAs. Attendance totaled 527 for classes including Filemaker Pro, *my*MCPS, Data Warehouse, Collecting and Displaying Data, Data Monitoring Tools, OASIS, Excel, and PowerPoint. In addition to attending courses, IDAs share best practices for disaggregating and sharing data that informs student instruction.

Enhancing the skills of school financial agents and their administrators was a major focus in 2010. To date, 412 school financial agents and 475 administrators have completed School Finance Basic Training. Cash Management for Sponsors, the first of a series of school finance webinars, was designed and delivered this year.