

# Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled



## GENERAL INFORMATION

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) is a statewide public school system serving Missouri students with severe disabilities. Established by state law in 1957, MSSD serves children and youth between the ages of 5 and 21.

MSSD is administered by the State Board of Education through the Division of Special Education. MSSD is supported primarily by funds appropriated annually by the state legislature.

Main offices for the MSSD superintendent and other supervisory staff are located in Jefferson City. Area offices are located in Sedalia, St. Louis and Springfield. Area directors work with the MSSD schools in their service areas.

MSSD serves students with severe disabilities throughout the state. A student is referred to MSSD when the local school district is unable to meet his or her educational needs. The district must develop justification reflecting that placement in a separate school is the most appropriate and least restrictive educational environment to meet the student's identified needs.

## WHO IS SERVED?

All students enrolled in MSSD have severe to profound disabilities as defined by the Missouri State Plan for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) classification system. Many students also have other disabilities that challenge their ability to receive appropriate education and related services in their local district programs.

## INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

MSSD employs classroom teachers who are certificated to teach students with severe disabilities. Each classroom has at least one full-time aide assigned to assist the teacher and students. The program strives for an adult-to-student ratio of less than 1-to-3.

MSSD employs physical education teachers and speech and language therapists. Depending on the size of the schools, these educators may work in one school or travel to multiple schools. Occupational, physical and some speech therapists provide services on a contractual basis depending on the needs of each school.

MSSD employs registered nurses. Depending on school size and student needs, some schools are assigned full-time nurses and some schools provide nursing services on a scheduled basis. MSSD employs supervisors for instruction who work with personnel to plan and improve the instructional program. Supervisors for instruction also provide outreach services to local school districts. MSSD employs home school coordinators who are assigned to one or more schools. As social workers, home school coordinators provide assistance to parents to locate the social services necessary to support their children.

## FACILITIES

Facilities have been specifically designed and built for MSSD to accommodate the instructional program. These facilities range in size from small to large school settings depending on the number of students served. Each MSSD school is administered by either a principal or a teacher in charge as appropriate for the number of classrooms at the school.

MSSD provides a six-hour instructional program. The majority of students live with their natural or foster parents and are transported by bus each day at no charge.

## CURRICULUM

MSSD provides a full range of instructional services designed to promote the development and functioning of each student. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed for each student. The student's IEP may be implemented in

the classroom, in the community and (when appropriate) through integration activities at the local school district. The IEP goals align with the Show-Me Standards in the following areas:

- communication arts
- mathematics
- science
- social studies
- health/physical education
- fine arts.

Staff members use a transdisciplinary approach to teaching and other services. This approach allows all members of the professional team (teachers, therapists, nurses, etc.) to exchange information and training so that all services are integrated into the daily instructional program.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about MSSD, please contact:

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**Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled**  
**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**  
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**Relay Missouri (TDD): 800-735-2966**



*(Note: Five percent of the financial support for the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled program is received from IDEA and other federal-funding sources.)*

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