

Issue Date: October 5, 2023

Specialized Service Providers (SSPs): Making Connections with VTmtss

Purpose

This document is to be used by school systems who are reviewing and improving their collaboration with Specialized Service Providers (SSPs) and utilizing/embedding their expertise. This tool is designed to increase staff awareness of these services and strive toward expanding access to these services for all students. This document would be most effective when used in conjunction with the [VTmtss Systems Screener](#), the [VTmtss Framework](#), and with the [VTmtss Driver Diagram](#).

AOE recognizes the complexity related to SSPs' services and expertise. Some of these contextual variations include providers under contract, or local budget, as well as licensure differences. Also recognized are the variations in SSP availability due to SU/SD, school size, and location. Provided are best practices and resources determined collaboratively with SSPs. Collaboration and creativity are essential to enhance the benefit of SSPs' expertise in our school systems.

Terms within this document:

- **Specialized Service Providers (SSPs)** Inclusive of Related Service Providers and other specialized roles such as School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists and School Nurses.
- **Related Service Providers (RSPs)** as defined by [IDEA](#):
 - Physical Therapists (PT), Occupational Therapists (OT), Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP), Board Certified Behavioral Analysis (BCBA)
- **Performance Indicator Categories** are the essential elements for effective inclusion of Specialized Service Providers.
- **Performance Indicators (PI)** describe what a school system would want to realize within each PI category.
- **Effective Practices** are examples of best practices within each Performance Indicator.
- **Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators** are the VTmtss Framework Component (its corresponding characteristic and indicators located within the component tab of the VTmtss Driver Diagram) to support improvement conversations that include RSP: Systemic and Comprehensive Approach (SCA), Effective Collaboration (EC), High-quality Instruction and Intervention (HQII), Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment System (CBAS), and Expertise (E).



When a school system has identified improving collaboration and utilizing/embedding the expertise of SSPs as a priority, this is how they should use this document:

1. Complete the VTmtss Systems Screener to help your school system articulate its systemic strengths and areas for improvement and inform how you approach your improvement work.
2. Decide which PI Category(ies) to focus on in your improvement work.
3. Use the VTmtss Driver Diagram to frame your action planning around your selected Category(ies).
4. Use the Performance Indicators and Effective Practices as reference points for what you should be working towards.
5. Focus on the Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators within your VTmtss Driver Diagram conversation, to help guide the direction of your action planning.

PI CATEGORY 1: COORDINATED COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
Effective Communication Strategies Are in Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In adopting and implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) schools train all staff and embed the SSPs in UDL. • Administration sends communication to families/ caregivers letting them know a SSP may be visiting the classrooms. • Administrators, and teachers include the integration of SSPs expertise of when communicating with families and community members, i.e., physicians, and designated agency. • Families are informed how educators are building SSP strategies into the classroom environment or regular routines. • SSPs are included in each school's staff directory. 	<p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> <u>(Characteristic #2, Indicator #3)</u></p> <p>There are respectful school-family and school-community partnerships that include participation in decision making, input into improved student learning, and culturally responsive teaching.</p>

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
Communication Across Roles is Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators support communication with staff on how SSP strategies can enhance learning for all students. Administrators support extra time for SSPs to collaborate with staff. Administrators facilitate a clear process for how faculty can ask SSPs to consult. 	<p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> <u>(Characteristic #2, Indicator #1)</u> There are purposeful collaborations formed to meet specific needs, have defined norms, roles, responsibilities, and processes.</p>

PI CATEGORY 2: SCHOOL LEVERAGES EXPERTISE OF SPECILAIZED SERVICE PROVIDERS (SSPS)

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
Administrators Conduct a Needs Assessment to Determine the Extent of Services of SSPs as Required for All Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple sources of data are analyzed to determine current student services and needs. Consultation of options for services with SSPs and/or their representative organizations. Resource needs and allocation is determined and revisited twice annually. 	<p><u>Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System (CBAS):</u> <u>(Characteristic #1, Indicator #2)</u> A focus on improving social emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all students.</p> <p><u>Systemic and Comprehensive Approach (SCA):</u> <u>(Characteristic #3, Indicator #2)</u> We regularly consider the quality and appropriateness of our instruction and intervention.</p> <p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> <u>(Characteristic #2, Indicator #2)</u> School structures support ongoing collaborative engagement focused on improving student outcomes in behavior, academics, and social-emotional learning.</p>

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
SSPs' Expertise Supports the Needs of Individual Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the SSPs' expertise at appropriate meetings. • Include SSPs' expertise in the determination of interventions. • SSPs are included throughout the entire IEP development process. 	<p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> (Characteristic #3, Indicator #1) Collaborative teams adopt a problem-solving approach.</p> <p><u>Expertise (E):</u> (characteristic #3, Indicator #2) Expertise is used flexibly and efficiently to develop, maintain, and employ resources as needed to ensure success for all students.</p>
SSPs Are Engaged as Partners in Student Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and SSPs partner to identify and implement plans and practices that support jointly identified desired outcomes or goals for any student. • SSPs develop and use ability to design short term interventions (6-10 weeks) such as for an Educational Support Team (EST). 	<p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> (Characteristic #2, Indicator #2) School structures support ongoing collaborative engagement focused on improving student outcomes in behavior, academics, and social-emotional learning.</p> <p>(Indicator #1) There are purposeful collaborations formed to meet specific needs, have defined norms, roles, responsibilities, and processes.</p>
SSP Expertise is Scheduled Throughout School System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is scheduled for SSPs to partner with teachers to collaborate on embedding SSP practices in different curriculum areas and various school settings. • When collaborating SSPs and educators understand which interventions could be appropriate for all students. • SSPs use a push-in model, as part of core, small group, and targeted instruction. If pull-out is necessary, it is supplemental rather than supplanting. 	<p><u>Effective Collaboration (EC):</u> (Characteristic #2, Indicator #2) School structures support ongoing collaborative engagement focused on improving student outcomes in behavior, academics, and social-emotional learning.</p> <p><u>Expertise (E):</u> (Characteristic #3, Indicator #2) Expertise is used flexibly and efficiently to develop, maintain, and employ resources as needed to ensure success for all students.</p>

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
SSPs Engage in Preventative Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSPs collaborate with classroom teachers to do available screenings, and informal individual observations with priority during transition time points. Include SSPs in classroom placement observation times and pre-kindergarten practices, for example, screenings. Include SSP observation with student daily environments (recess, cafeteria). 	<p><u>High-Quality Instruction and Intervention (HQII):</u> <u>(Characteristic #2, Indicator #3)</u> All instruction and intervention approaches and supports respond to student need and ensure equity of opportunity and outcome.</p>

PI CATEGORY 3: INTERVENTION MODEL IS COLLABORATIVE

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
SSPs are Engaged as Partners with Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSPs are consulted for recommendations for the set-up of classroom and other school spaces. SSPs are consulted on UDL and inclusive teaching practices/language. SSPs are consulted during curriculum development. SSPs are consulted when an outdoor space, renovation, or expansion is being planned. 	<p><u>High-Quality Instruction and Intervention (HQII):</u> <u>(Characteristic #2, Indicator #3)</u> All instruction and intervention approaches and supports respond to student need and ensure equity of opportunity and outcome.</p>

Performance Indicator	What does effective practice look like?	Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators
There is a Shared Understanding of Child Developmental Across Cultural Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSPs, staff, and families/ caregivers have opportunities to build a shared understanding of grade level curriculum and student's skill mastery progress. During the decision-making process for determining practices/interventions individual and culturally responsive measures and outcomes are used. 	<p><u>High-Quality Instruction and Intervention (HQII):</u> <u>(Characteristic #3, Indicator #1)</u> Instruction is provided by expert teachers, informed by research/evidence, and is focused on important and appropriate outcomes.</p>