

**New Jersey Department of Education
Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

Receiving School: 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey **County:** Essex

Monitoring Dates: May 23, 2005 and May 25, 2005

Monitoring Team: Ann Marie Bruder, Diane Mari, Zola Mills and Mark Lanzi

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed receiving school documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in IEPs, staff evaluations, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students/teachers/related service personnel, and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with the receiving school's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey is commended for its use of technology and technological services. The school has the necessary updated equipment for individuals with physical impairments to assist in accessing computers and electrical devices. The technology lab has a wide variety of switches for computer usage, head pointers, and adaptable keyboards. The school has a full kitchen that is wheelchair accessible and adapted to enable students to learn daily living skills. Staff discusses the use of adaptable equipment with families so that learned skills can be reinforcement at home.

The school also has additional services such as a sitting clinic to ensure that students are positioned properly to complete daily activities and a wheelchair repair clinic available. They assist students and families in getting necessary equipment and lend

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

equipment to the families to determine if the equipment is suitable before a purchase is made. An orthopedist, podiatrist and ophthalmologist also come to the school to provide the students with necessary care.

The 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey has an in school mentorship program that allows the older students to be mentors or peer models for the younger students. During the school year, school staff assists families in making connections with Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey offers medical care day programs to graduates of their program to assist in providing postsecondary opportunities. The medical day program has job training within the school environment and includes life skills, music appreciation, art appreciation, and community experiences.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

FAPE, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey identified concerns in the areas regarding staff development and parent training. The 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in the area of staff training.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

Section III: Staff Requirements:

During self-assessment, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals and having an approved professional development plan.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding criminal history verification.

Area of Need:

Criminal History Verification- During the on-site visit, through a review of staff lists and criminal history documentation it was determined that the school does not maintain criminal history verification for all currently employed staff.

**New Jersey Department of Education
Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

- **The school will immediately submit requests for emergent hiring through the County Superintendent’s Office for all staff members in noncompliance and follow up with the criminal history review office for staff whose fingerprint data have not been returned in a timely manner. In addition, the school must revise their improvement plan to include procedures, and an administrative oversight component to ensure that all staff members obtain criminal history clearance prior to starting employment at the school.**

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections and fire drills.

During the self-assessment process, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey identified concerns in the areas regarding the development of a disaster plan for their school. The school’s improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the areas regarding communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components and implementation of IEP modifications.

Areas of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts – During the on-site visit, a review of student records indicated that the receiving school does not communicate with the sending districts when IEP components are missing, or measurable goals and objectives are omitted from the IEP. Areas missing include, but are not limited to, measurable goals and objectives, discussion of extended school year, least restrictive environment statements and testing requirements.

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that they communicate with sending districts when any IEP components including, but not limited to, measurable goals and**

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

objectives, extended school year statements, least restrictive environment statements, testing requirements, are missing or incomplete. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant impletion of the procedures.

Implementation of IEP Modifications – During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews it was determined that selected students are being removed from their self contained class to review small group instruction in math and reading which are instructed by a certified teacher of the handicapped. Also, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey offers a variety of modified equipment, technology and seating supports for the students to achieve. The program modifications and use of specialized equipment is not included in the students' IEPs.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that if the school believes that a student would benefit from any program modifications or specialized equipment not included in the IEP, the school will contact the child study team of the sending district to determine whether the modifications are warranted. In addition, the school must revise their procedures to ensure that any changes to the programs or services offered must be submitted to the county office of education for review and approval. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey identified concerns in the areas regarding teachers trained and instructed in CCC's. The receiving schools improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey on May 23 and 25, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the receiving school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify many areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

FAPE, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the receiving school during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, regarding certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey identified areas of need regarding staff development, parent training and core curriculum content standards.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding criminal history verification, the development of a disaster plan, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components and implementation of IEP modifications and adaptive equipment.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the 1st Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey will revise and submit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.