

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

Receiving School: Lord Stirling School **County:** Somerset

Monitoring Dates: February 10 and 11, 2003

Monitoring Team: Paul Bilik, Elaine Lerner, Sandra Gogerty

Background Information:

During the 2001– 2002 school year, the Lord Stirling School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Lord Stirling School 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 Lord Stirling School 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 Lord Stirling 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 Lord Stirling School's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers and related service personnel. Please note that one area of need identified requires immediate action on the part of the school.

School Strengths:

The school provides opportunities for students, where appropriate, to return to their sending districts for both academic and nonacademic activities.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Facility Requirements and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Lord Stirling School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

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Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and provision of programs in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified concerns in the areas of policies and procedures related to staff training. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. A review of documentation reviewed during the on-site visit verified implementation of improvement plan activities.

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

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and year, provision of physical education and services provided at no cost to the parents.

During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified concerns in the area of provision of speech services during the extended school year. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During staff interviews it was verified that speech services will be provided during the extended school year by a certified speech therapist. The school also identified concerns in the area of procedures for on-site visits by local education agencies and Department of Education representatives. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks administrative oversight.** The school's improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding procedures for hearing aid checks, provision of extended school year programs and provision of related services in accordance with IEPs.

Areas of Need:

Hearing Aid Checks – During the on-site visit, through record reviews it was determined that the school's procedures for hearing aid checks does not provide for daily monitoring.

- **The school will revise their improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that if any enrolled student wears hearing aids, they are checked on a daily basis.**

Provision of Related Services- During the on-site visit through record reviews and interviews it was determined that counseling is not provided to students in accordance with IEPs. All students receive group counseling services which may not be indicated in IEPs.

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- **The school will revise its improvement plan to ensure that all students receive individual counseling if indicated in IEPs. The school must provide documentation of the provision of related services in accordance with student IEPs to the Department of Education within 45 days of the receipt of this report. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, use of physical therapy assistants (PTAs) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTAs), 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 for newly hired staff.

Area of Need:

Criminal History Verification- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews, it was determined that the school does not have procedures for newly hired staff to be fingerprinted.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to ensure that as staff members are hired, appointments are scheduled for fingerprinting and emergency hiring applications are processed through the county office of education. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meetings conducted annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified concerns in the areas of core curriculum content standards and positive behavioral supports for students. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. Through staff interviews it was verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit concerning communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components.

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Area of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school does not consistently communicate to sending districts when IEP components, such as counseling and speech goals and objectives and educational goals and objectives, are missing. In addition, student progress is not consistently communicated to districts.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates to sending districts when IEP components, such as counseling and speech goals and objectives and educational goals and objectives, are missing. The school must also revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that sending districts are consistently notified of student progress. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, suspensions and interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified concerns in the areas of standard disciplinary procedures and termination of a student's placement prior to the end of the academic year. The school's improvement plan in the area of standard disciplinary procedures is sufficient to address this area of need. **The school's improvement plan in the area of termination of student's placement is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation on the procedures.** The school's improvement plan must be revised to include these components.

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lord Stirling School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size/age range, description of special class programs, implementing IEPs, home instruction and dispensing of medication/nursing services. During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified concerns in the areas of exceptions for class size/age range and core curriculum content standards. The improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. In addition, documentation of improvement activities was verified during the on-site visit.

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

Summary

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On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Lord Stirling School on February 10 and 11, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Lord Stirling School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the Lord Stirling School's improvement plan.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Lord Stirling School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and provision of programs in nonsectarian settings, length of school day and year, provision of physical education and services provided at no cost to the parents, certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTAs, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, and having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meetings conducted annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, and progress reports, class size/age range, description of special class programs, implementing IEPs, home instruction and dispensing of medication/nursing services, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access to records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Lord Stirling School identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures related to staff training, provision of speech services during the extended school year, core curriculum content standards and positive behavioral supports for students, standard disciplinary procedures, termination of a student's placement, exceptions for class size/age range and core curriculum content standards

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding hearing aid checks, provision of extended school year programs and provision of related services in accordance with the IEPs, regarding criminal history verification for newly hired staff, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components.

This report identifies one area of non-compliance that requires immediate action by the school administration. This has been identified within the report. Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Lord Stirling School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs and to the county office of education to address those remaining areas that require revisions.