

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

UPDATED REPORT

Receiving School: Juvenile Resource Center

County: Camden

Monitoring Dates: January 23-24, 2006
March 7, 2007 (Follow-up)

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Background Information:

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Juvenile Resource Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Juvenile Resource Center 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 Juvenile Resource Center 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 individualized education programs (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 principal, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

Noncompliant items reflected in this report may result in nonallowable costs imposed by the Division of Finance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.1 through 4.16.

School Strengths:

The Juvenile Resource Center is commended for its comprehensive family support/training program. A number of well attended on-site parent training sessions have been held with others planned throughout the school year. The training sessions

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demonstrate the school's collaboration with community resources, in that the training program is funded through a grant by Target Stores.

Teachers visit students' homes on a regular basis to report progress in school and to reinforce behavior modification goals and objectives. The school is also commended for the rigorous support of the certified school social worker who offers assistance with crisis intervention and prevention.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Juvenile Resource Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Juvenile Resource Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and NJDOE, provision of services as per IEP and provision of counseling services as per IEP.

An area of need was identified regarding length of school day and year.

Area of Need:

Length of School Day and Year- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and a review of the school calendar and master schedule, it was determined that the school does not provide a minimum of four hours of instruction during scheduled shortened days. The 2005-2006 school calendar identified every Friday as a shortened day. The school is in session from 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., with a 20 minute lunch period. Additional shortened days were held throughout the year, including three days during the first week of school, three days in November for parent teacher report card conferences and for the NJEA convention and one shortened day before winter break. A review of the calendar indicates that between the beginning of the school year and the date of the on-site visit, 17 days did not meet the four-hour minimum standard. This area of need was discussed with the school's administrator during the on-site visit. As a result, all future shortened days will include a minimum of four hours of instruction. The administrator anticipated that the new schedule would begin on or about January 30, 2006. From the start of the school year of September 7, 2005 to January 30, 2006 there were 90 school days. Of those days, 17 did not meet the minimum four hours of instruction.

- The school will increase the scheduled hours of instruction on shortened days to ensure that students receive a minimum of four hours of instruction per day for a minimum of 180 per school days per year, as required.

Update:

A follow-up monitoring visit was conducted on March 7, 2007 to verify the total number of shortened days during the 2005-2006 school year. During that visit, the monitoring

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team reviewed class schedules and the school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year. The additional documentation provided clarification as to the start time of the school day and the number of snow days that the school used during the 2005-2006 school year. As a result of that review, it was determined that the instructional time for students on the shortened days was 3 hours and 30 minutes for 21 school days between September 2005 and January 2006. The school provided written documentation confirming the number of shortened school days, class schedules and a revised 2005-2006 school calendar reflecting a minimum of four hours of instruction beginning February 2006. As a result of the documentation provided, it was determined that this area of noncompliance has been corrected.

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Juvenile Resource Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, and having an approved professional development plan.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit, in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff and criminal history verification.

Areas of Need:

Criminal History Review Verification- During the on-site visit, the school was unable to present written documentation that all currently employed persons have submitted to a criminal history review, as required.

- **The school will immediately process criminal history review verification for all staff members hired by the school after October 8, 1986. The school will also request written permission for emergent hiring from the county superintendent pending completion of the criminal history review. In addition, the school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure consistent implementation of criminal history review requirements. The plan must include procedures to ensure that written documentation of compliance with criminal history review requirements is maintained at the school. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Juvenile Resource Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities and certificates of occupancy and inspections.

During the self-assessment process, the Juvenile Resource Center identified concerns in the areas regarding fire drills. **The school's improvement plan was insufficient to address this area of need because it lacked the required frequency for fire drills.**

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Prior to the on-site visit, the school increased the frequency to ensure that fire drills are conducted at least two times a month when school is in session. As a result, the school has revised their plan and has appropriately implemented correction in this area.

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

Section V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Juvenile Resource Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students, 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.

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

Area of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that the school does not have procedures for communicating with sending districts when IEP components, including but not limited to goals and objectives and transition, are missing.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to provide for collaboration and communication with local school districts that results in complete IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Juvenile Resource Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding special class program descriptions maintained at the county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction and dispensing medication.

During the self-assessment process, the Juvenile Resource Center identified concerns in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, provision of nursing services and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of class size and age range and exceptions. The school has appropriately implemented activities for correction in these areas. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area regarding provision of nursing services because it does not include activities that will result in the employment of a certified school nurse.**

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The school must revise their plan to ensure that the required full range of nursing services is provided in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(e). In addition, the school should revise their improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that student health records are maintained separately from students' educational records.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs.

Teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, classroom observations and a review of staff training materials, it was determined that only some of the instructional staff were knowledgeable in the implementation of the CCCS and consequently, classroom instruction did not consistently reflect the standards throughout the instructional day.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all instructional staff members are trained and provide instruction in the CCCS. The plan must include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Juvenile Resource Center on January 23-24, 2006. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Juvenile Resource Center's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving school conducted a comprehensive review during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that, with some revision, will bring about systemic change.

General Provisions, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Juvenile Resource Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Juvenile Resource Center during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and NJDOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of counseling services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students, 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, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction and dispensing medication.

During the self-assessment process, the Juvenile Resource Center identified areas of need regarding fire drills, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, provision of nursing services and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding length of school day and year, certified/licensed staff, criminal history verification, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components and teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs.

This report identifies one area of non-compliance that requires immediate action by the school administration relating to criminal history verification. Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Juvenile Resource Center 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.