

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: ECLC of New Jersey- Ho-Ho-Kus
ECLC of New Jersey- Chatham

Counties: Bergen and Morris

Monitoring Dates: September 20-22 2004

Monitoring Team: Ann Marie Bruder, Janet Wright, Gregory Margolis, Diane Mari and Heather Mills-Pevonis

Background Information:

During the 2003–2004 school year, the ECLC of New Jersey (Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus Campuses) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the ECLC schools 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 ECLC schools developed improvement plans 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 plans and to determine the schools' progress in implementing the plans.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed ECLC of New Jersey 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 special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, related service personnel and parents.

School Strengths:

The ECLC of New Jersey is commended for their comprehensive transition program. Through their job skills program, "Seeking Knowledge for Independent Living (SKIL)" students' learn how to develop a resume and practice for interviews. This program also allows students to work as volunteers or work for paying jobs in the community. Throughout their high school years, students are exposed to different careers and skills required for a variety of jobs. Students receive hands-on training to complete job related

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tasks in the school or off-site at job placements within the community. Independent living skills are also reinforced within the ECLC program. Emphasis is placed on food preparation, living within a budget, personal hygiene, travel training and general housekeeping skills. The ECLC Community Personnel Services (CPS), a supported employment program, follows students during their graduation year and provides ongoing support during their post school years. CPS is designed to assist students with job placement and support in their home communities and is approved as a vendor for both the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities and New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

The STEP (Students Earning Privileges) behavior management program encourages students to demonstrate appropriate behavior. Students earn "Hero Status" by completing a special activity and/or showing certain acts of kindness to others. The school also has a Dress for Success Program in which students demonstrate positive behaviors and dress in clothing appropriate for work, social, casual, special evening events. A variety of clubs and activities are available for the students to acquire social and recreational skills. These include after school enrichment/recreation programs, a weekend respite program for currently enrolled students which include activities such as bowling, scouting, movies, cooking, painting, dances and intramural sports. The schools also provide opportunities for students to participate in community service through the ECLC Key Club with support from the Kiwanis and Garden Club. The school also provides alumni with access to similar social activities scheduled throughout the year.

The schools are also commended for their use of technology which includes the use of computers with internet access in each classroom and in therapy rooms. All classrooms are also equipped with a sound field system for both group and individual student use. Specialized equipment for students requiring Braille and augmentative communication devices are available.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, FAPE, Staff Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the ECLC of New Jersey during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the ECLC of New Jersey 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 ECLC of New Jersey identified concerns in the areas regarding fire drills. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. ECLC of New Jersey has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

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Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the ECLC of New Jersey accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required 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 and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the ECLC of New Jersey identified concerns in the areas regarding documentation of implementation of IEP components relating to interactions with general education peers and communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of interactions with general education peers. During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the ECLC of New Jersey has implemented activities to bring the area of interactions with general education peers into compliance.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit in the area regarding IEP goals and objectives.

Area of Need

During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that, although it is not the receiving school's responsibility to do so, ECLC staff provides IEP annual goals and objectives to the IEP team. While the goals and objectives are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, they are not individualized and they lack criteria for being observable and measurable.

- **ECLC must revise their improvement plan to either offer IEP teams goals and objectives that are individualized, observable and measurable or communicate with the sending district to ensure that the IEP team revises the goals and objectives provided by ECLC to make certain that they are individualized, observable and measurable.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the ECLC of New Jersey (Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus Campuses) on September 20- 22, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the ECLC of New Jersey report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the ECLC of New Jersey's improvement plan.

The ECLC of New Jersey is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the receiving school was able to identify and correct all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The ECLC of New Jersey is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the ECLC of New Jersey is commended for the many areas that were determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the ECLC of New Jersey during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included **General Provisions, FAPE, Staff Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services, and Student Records.**

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant include programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, 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 and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the ECLC of New Jersey identified areas of need regarding fire drills, documentation of communication to the sending districts regarding missing IEP components and availability of interaction with general education peers.

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