

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

Receiving School: Lakeview School

County: Middlesex

Monitoring Dates: October 19 & 20, 2004

Monitoring Team: Denise Wilkens, Paul Bilik, Heather Mills-Pevonis

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Lakeview School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Lakeview 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 Lakeview 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 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 Lakeview School provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary team approach to maximize each student's potential for physical well being and academic growth. The Lakeview School is commended for the variety of enrichment activities conducted throughout the school year that reinforce acquisition of competencies in the core curriculum content standards and reinforce individual goals and objectives found in each participating student's IEP. Classroom teachers and treating therapists recommend students for participation in these activities or students may volunteer for programs including vocal choir for verbal or partially verbal students; augmentative choir which allows non-verbal students to "sing" using augmentative devices and alternate communication systems; bell choir for severely physically disabled students; band that allows students with moderate upper body physical limitations to learn to play musical instruments; dance group that provides instruction and training in rhythm and adaptive dance routines; the SEE program that enables students to learn photography through adapted cameras, switches, and equipment; computer graphics using adaptive technology and switches; the MOVE group that supports student gross motor skills and increased mobility through the use of adaptive

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equipment and finally the wheelchair licensing program which teaches students safety and “driving” instruction for manual and power wheel chairs.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Lakeview School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Lakeview School 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 Lakeview School identified concerns in the area regarding staff development. The receiving school’s improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Lakeview School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview School identified concerns in the area regarding certified/licensed staff. The receiving school’s improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

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

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During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview School identified concerns in the area regarding fire drills. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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 Lakeview School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, 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 IEP goals and objectives.

During the self assessment process, the Lakeview School identified a concern in the area of invitations to outside agencies, such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) for students transitioning to post secondary programs. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

During the on-site visit, an additional area of need was revealed regarding changes to a student's IEP.

Area of Need:

IEP Meeting Conducted with Appropriate Participants – During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that proposed changes to IEPs were being developed during staffing meetings at Lakeview School without notification to the sending district. Subsequently, the sending district and, in some cases, the parent were informed after the decision had been made and were asked to approve it once an IEP team meeting was convened.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that any proposed changes to an IEP will be directed to the sending district for review and discussion with an appropriately configured IEP team. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to

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sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview School identified concerns in the area regarding procedures for the use of aversive therapies. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of the policy manual and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview School 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, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers instructing in core curriculum content standards (CCCSs), 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 Lakeview School identified concern in the area regarding the alignment of curriculum to the state's core curriculum content standards. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Lakeview School on October 19 and 20, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Lakeview School 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 all but one area 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.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Lakeview School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Lakeview School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, 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 IEP goals and objectives, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student placement, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers instructing in CCCs, 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 Lakeview School identified areas of need regarding staff development, certified/licensed staff, fire drills, inclusion of outside agencies, use of aversive therapies, and alignment of curriculum to core curriculum content standards.

The on-site visit identified one additional area of need regarding IEP conducted with appropriate participants.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Lakeview School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the one area that requires revision.