

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: Delaware Valley School for Exceptional Children

County: Mercer

Monitoring Dates: November 28-December 1, 2005

Monitoring Team: Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen and Elaine Lerner

Background Information:

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Delaware Valley School for Exceptional Children (DVSEC) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the DVSEC 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 DVSEC 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 Program (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.

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

School Strengths:

The DVSEC is commended for their state-of-the-art computer facility that is used by all students on a daily basis. The computer/student ratio is 2:1 for their daily academic work and weekly computer lessons. They should also be commended for their Teen Pep Program that was implemented during the 2003-2004 school year. The program allows teens to teach other teens about drug use, alcohol abuse, and other risky behavior. The goal is to help educate students to avoid these behaviors. The DVSEC

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

also offers a gang prevention program and cultural awareness and bullying prevention activities provided by The George Street Playhouse.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the DVSEC during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section V: Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the DVSEC accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meetings conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meetings 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 and implementation of IEP components.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components and informing parents of progress toward IEP goals and objectives.

Areas of Need:

IEP Goals and Objectives- During the on-site visit, through record review, it was determined that, although it is not the receiving school's responsibility to do so, DVSEC provides IEP annual goal and objectives to the IEP team. While the goals and objectives are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCSs), they lack criteria for being observable, measurable and do not indicate criteria for mastery.

- **The school must revise their improvement plan to either offer IEP teams goals and objectives that are observable and measurable and include criteria for mastery or communicate with the sending district to ensure that the IEP team revises the goals and objectives provided by DVSEC to make certain that they are observable, measurable, and include criteria for mastery.**

Provision of Progress Reports- During the on-site visit it was determined, through record review and teacher interviews, that while the school does provide parents and districts with progress reports, they do not address progress toward annual goals and objectives.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students' progress toward annual goals and objectives is measured and reported to districts and parents. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the DVSEC 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 trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

During the self-assessment process, the DVSEC identified concerns in the areas regarding dispensing medication/nursing services. The receiving school'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 these areas.

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 DVSEC on November 28-December 1, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the DVSEC'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 comprehensive review conducted 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. 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.

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

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the DVSEC during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with age appropriate students, 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 relating to administration, statewide testing for support and assistance, implementation of IEP components, 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 trained in CCCSs, teachers instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

During the self-assessment process, the DVSEC identified areas of need regarding dispensing medication/nursing services.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the DVSEC 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.