

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

**Receiving School:** Allegro School

**County:** Morris County

**Monitoring Dates:** November 18-20, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Theresa Schiffenhaus, Gary Molenaar, Jennifer DeSaye

**Background Information:**

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Allegro School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Allegro 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 Allegro 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 Allegro 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 Allegro School's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers and related service personnel. Classroom observations and facility inspections were also conducted.

This report identifies activities the school must take in order to comply with federal and state requirements. Please be advised that one of these activities require immediate action on the part of the school.

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**School Strengths:**

The Allegro School is commended for the many programs they provide in the school and community as well. Allegro offers a full range of services for students with autism and pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) that is based upon the individual's student's strengths, weaknesses, needs, and talents. Students participate in concerts, assemblies, field day, and an elaborate graduation program. Allegro students swim at the local YMCA, go bowling, shopping, eat in restaurants, and participate in a variety of field trips each year. Allegro uses an interdisciplinary approach to learning which includes speech and occupational therapists assisting in the development of classroom programs and behavior plans. In addition to applied behavior analysis, the Allegro School staff also uses components of discrete trial training, applied verbal behavior approach, and other approaches as well.

Transition is a very important component of every student's program at the Allegro School. In the younger classes, attempts are made to transition as many students as possible back into their districts. The Allegro School's transition team works with both the classroom teacher and district personnel with the goal of returning the student back to district as soon as possible. When a student meets transition criteria and a placement is chosen, the student's program is modified to focus on the skills needed for the particular environment. A transition assistant (shadow) facilitates the student's learning in the outside environment. A transition coordinator functions as the contact point for all parties and conducts trainings at the transition site for all district personnel involved with the Allegro student until the student is fully included.

Family involvement is strongly encouraged at the Allegro School. They conduct parent training sessions and hold periodic meetings for all parents to review classroom happenings, student progress, and demonstrate teaching techniques. Parent sessions allow the opportunity for networking and sharing of experiences. Back to school night, parent support sessions, school assemblies, classroom parties, an open school policy, and the Home and School Association all serve to facilitate parent involvement.

The Allegro School also has a joint agreement with the local high school where students volunteer for various activities at the school. Some students act as older peer models; other students are junior instructors at an after-school recreational program for elementary age students. This program has been expanded to include interactions with the adolescent students during school time where they participate with Allegro students in gym, cooking, and other activities for socialization and skill development, one to four hours a week.

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**Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**Facility Requirements** and **Discipline** were determined to be areas demonstrating compliance with all standards by the Allegro School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

**Section I: General Provisions**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Allegro 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 Allegro school identified concerns in the area of staff development. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit.

**Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Allegro School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year, observation of programs, and the related services of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling.

During the self-assessment process, the Allegro School identified concerns in the area of the provision of speech services. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures to ensure how districts will be notified that speech services have not been provided and arrangements made to provide compensatory services. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include these components.

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

**Section III: Staff Requirements**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Allegro School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, use of physical therapy

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assistants/certified occupational therapy assistants, private school dual employment, employment of paraprofessionals, and criminal history verification.

During the self-assessment process, the Allegro School identified concerns in the area of professional development. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

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 Allegro School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEP participants, signatures on IEPs, current IEP, IEP accessibility, inform 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 Allegro School identified concerns in the area of communication to sending districts regarding missing components. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

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

**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Allegro School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, special classes implementing IEP, core curriculum content standards including core curriculum content standards for students with severe disabilities (CCCSs/CCCSSSD), home instruction, and preschool programs.

During the self-assessment process, the Allegro School identified concerns in the area of medication/nursing services. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks appropriate procedures for medication/nursing services that are consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3 and that exclude the use of Emergency Medical Technician(s) to dispense medication which is prohibited under N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3.** The plan must also include an administrative oversight

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**component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include these components.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding age range.

**Area of Need:**

**Class Size/Age Range Exceptions–** During the on-site visit, staff interviews, and a review of records indicated that some classes, located in the same room, are split into A and B sections to accommodate a greater than four year age range.

- **Within 45 days, the Allegro School will assign students in instructional classes that meet age range requirements as stated in code. The school must also revise their improvement plan to include procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that all classes are in compliance with code requirements. The improvement plan must also include procedures for requesting an age waiver from the district if the four year requirement is exceeded and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes and ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Allegro School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Allegro School identified concerns in the areas of access to records and written notice of attendance. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

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**Summary**

The receiving school 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 all but one area of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The receiving school 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 receiving school 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.

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Allegro School on November 18 and 19, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Allegro School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the Allegro School's improvement plan.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Allegro School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring include; policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, nonsectarian, length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP, counseling, certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEP, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, restraints, and aversives, removal of student, changes to program/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEP, CCCSs/CCCSSSD, home instruction, preschool programs, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Allegro School identified areas of need regarding staff development, speech, professional development, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, medication/nursing services, access to records and written notice of attendance. The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding class size/age range exceptions.

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This report identifies one area of non-compliance that requires immediate action by the school administration. Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Allegro 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 areas that require revisions.