

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

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**Receiving School:** A. Harry Moore

**County:** Hudson

**Monitoring Dates:** April 10, 11, & 15, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Mitchell Badiner, Cecelia Downey, Elaine Lerner, Gary Molenaar,  
Susan Smahl

### **Background Information**

During the 2001 – 2002 school year, the A. Harry Moore school conducted a self-assessment of special education policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the A. Harry Moore school with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- the provision of a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities;
- 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 A. Harry Moore School developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Department of Education conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and determine the progress made in implementing the plan.

Prior to the on-site visit, the monitoring team reviewed school documents, including receiving school policies and procedures, classroom schedules, related services schedules, individual student schedules, master student lists, and class lists.

During the on-site visit, the monitoring team reviewed student count information, survey results used in developing the self-assessment, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records, criminal history checks, fire drill logs, school calendars, teacher schedules, and therapy logs. The monitoring team conducted on-site observations of the school's special education programs. Interviews were conducted with the A. Harry Moore school principal, assistant principal, program coordinator, child study team, special education teachers, physical education teacher, physical and occupational therapists, speech therapists, and classroom assistants. Parents of students attending the A. Harry Moore School were interviewed by telephone.

### **School Strengths:**

The A. Harry Moore School is commended for the consistency it has achieved in maintaining its staff for a significant number of years, which provides considerable instructional and therapeutic continuity for their students. Several staff members reported that they have been with the school for more than 25 years. A. Harry Moore School's commitment to professional development and higher education is evident through its role as a laboratory school, which provides training to many undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of special education, psychology, social work, and occupational and physical therapy. The school's students directly benefit from this professional development commitment through the introduction of innovative educational programs.

A program of note is the A. Harry Moore Transition Opportunity Program or TOP's. TOP's is a comprehensive program which addresses school to adult life transition through vocational classes (in school and share-time), career awareness/exploration, self advocacy, job coaching and development, monthly parent workshops to support transition, agency referral and positive connections, etc.

The school's commitment to the use of technology to enhance student instruction is apparent throughout the program and should be commended. From simple switches, which enable student choice, to more complex computer driven communication devices, technology is used effectively. One particular class has established a website which describes their school as well as their classroom activities.

### **Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**General Provisions, Facility Requirements, and Discipline** were determined to be areas of compliance by the school and by the Department of Education during the on-site visit.

## **SECTION II. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)**

### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the school accurately identified themselves as compliant in the areas of length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services provided at no cost to the parents, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP and related services.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding extended school year consideration during IEP meetings.

### **Area of Need:**

**Extended School Year Consideration** - During the on-site visit, a review of student records and information obtained through the interview process indicates that the need for extended school year programming is not consistently considered during the students' IEP meeting. As part of the IEP team, A. Harry staff has a responsibility to provide information regarding

regression/recoupment at IEP meetings so that the IEP team can consider the need for extended school year services for all enrolled students.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the IEP team makes an individual determination regarding the need for extended school year programming based upon whether the interruption in educational programming causes the student’s performance to revert to a lower level and recoupment cannot be expected in a reasonable length of time. The plan must include in-service activities and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

### **SECTION III. STAFF REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the A. Harry Moore School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, dual employment, job descriptions for classroom aides and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified concerns regarding criminal history verification. The school’s improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of criminal history because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

### **SECTION V. IEP/ANNUAL REVIEW**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of staff attendance at IEP meetings, current IEPs, communication with sending districts, accessibility to IEPs, staff knowledge of accommodations and modifications, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified concerns regarding statewide assessments. The school has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address the area of statewide assessment.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the implementation of IEPs.

#### **Area of Need:**

**IEP Implementation** - During the on-site visit, staff interviews and record review indicated that IEPs are implemented immediately following IEP meetings without waiting the required 15-day

consideration period and without the district obtaining parental consent for immediate implementation.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure IEPs are not implemented prior to the 15-day notice period without parental consent. The plan must include in-service and an administrative component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

## **SECTION VII. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of instructional class sizes, exceptions, description of special class programs, Core Curriculum Content Standards/ Core Curriculum Content Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities (CCCS/CCCSSSD), home instruction, administering medication, nursing and medical services, school functions and services and preschool programs.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified a concern regarding notification to the sending districts that an age range waiver request should be made. The school has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

## **SECTION VIII. STUDENT RECORDS**

### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of returning records, access to records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, notification to districts of tardiness and absences, written notification to the Department of Education and mandated health records.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified concerns regarding receipt of notification of placement forms from the sending districts. The school developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedure. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at the A. Harry Moore School on April 10, 11, & 15, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the school's improvement plan. The school is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review, the school was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The school is further commended for the many areas that were determined by the school and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

During parent interviews, many parents commented positively on both the school's program and the commitment to the students by the school's staff members. Observations during the on-site visit confirmed the comments expressed by the parents.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, staff development, annual reports, amendments, the provision of programs and services in nonsectarian settings, length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services provided at no cost to the parents, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP, related services, certified/licensed staff, dual employment, job descriptions, approved professional development plan, approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, staff attendance at IEP meetings, current IEPs, communication with sending districts, accessibility of IEPs, staff knowledge of accommodations and modifications, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components, progress reports, discipline, changes to program/placement, suspensions, tracking of suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, terminations,, instructional class sizes, exceptions, description of special class programs, CCCS/CCSSSD, home instruction, administering medication, nursing and medical services, preschool programs, pupil record code, return of records, access and location of records, daily attendance, notification to sending districts of excessive absences, and mandated health records.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified areas of need regarding criminal history verification, statewide assessments, and notification to the sending districts that an age range waiver request should be made and receipt of notification of placement forms.

The on-site visit identified two additional areas of need within the various standards regarding extended school year consideration during IEP meetings and implementation of IEPs.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the school will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.