

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: School for Children with Hidden Intelligence **County:** Ocean

Monitoring Dates: December 9-10, 2002

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Background Information:

During the 2001– 2002 school year, The School for Children with Hidden Intelligence (SCHI) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the SCHI 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 SCHI 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 and related service personnel.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

FAPE and Discipline were determined to be areas of compliance by the SCHI School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of staff development, annual reports and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding amendments for class program approval.

Area of Need:

Program Approvals – During the on-site visit, record reviews and interviews indicated that the SCHI School is operating classes without prior written approval by the Department of Education through the county office of education.

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the SCHI School operates programs approved by the Department of Education. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of employment/job descriptions for paraprofessionals.

During the self-assessment process, the SCHI School identified concerns in the area of having an approved professional development plan. **The school has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks appropriate timelines to ensure that the school submits their professional development plan in a timely manner. The plan must also be revised to include an administrative oversight component to ensure that the professional development plan is implemented as written.** During the on-site visit, documentation was provided to confirm that the professional development plan was submitted to the county office.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding certified licensed staff, private school dual employment and criminal history.

Areas of Need:

Certified/Licensed Staff- During the on-site visit through classroom observations and staff interviews it was determined that staff members were not appropriately certified in their respective areas of instruction. Though personnel holding full-time teaching positions were certified substitutes, a review of records indicated that staff members were serving for more than twenty consecutive days in the same position.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all long-term staff absences are covered by appropriately certified staff. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Dual Employment- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that a related service provider was also employed by the Lakewood Board of Education.

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

- **The school will immediately review the employment of any staff also employed by a sending school district to determine that the employee has no direct or indirect responsibility for the placement of students. In addition, the school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that if related service providers are dually employed by a sending public school district and the approved private school for the disabled, they have no involvement in placement decisions. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Criminal History Verification- During the on-site visit, through a review of staff lists and criminal history documentation, it was determined that the school does not maintain verification of the criminal history check for all staff members employed by the school.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that all staff members are fingerprinted for criminal history reviews.**

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of fire drills.

During the self-assessment process, the SCHI School identified concerns in the areas of facility approvals. **The school has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures and timelines to ensure that programs are provided in approved facilities. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.** The plan must be revised to include these components.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding certificate of occupancy and health inspection and appropriate nursing station.

Areas of Need:

Certificate of Occupancy and Health Inspection- During the on-site visit, a review of documents indicated that the school does not have current certificate of occupancy and health inspection for building #2.

- **The school must develop an improvement plan to include activities to ensure that current building certificates are maintained at the school. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Nurses' Station- During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a tour of the school building confirmed that the square footage of the room is inadequate to provide the required private rest area.

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

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include activities to identify an appropriate location for the provision of nursing services, with final approval from the county office.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of staff attendance at IEP meetings, signatures present on IEPs, IEP accessibility, informing staff of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and progress reports.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the areas of IEP meetings conducted annually, current IEPs, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, IEP components concerning the provision of related services and IEP implementation.

Areas of Need:

Current IEPs/Meetings Conducted Annually- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that staff use SCHI IEP worksheets when district IEPs are not made available to the SCHI School.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures for notifying the district when an IEP is not current. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure that each student attending the school has a current IEP.**

Communication with Sending Districts- During the on-site visit, through record reviews it was determined that the school does not communicate with sending districts when IEP components are missing. Sections consistently omitted including goals and objectives, statement of transition services, signature pages, related service page, location of services and statewide assessment.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components including goals and objectives, statement of transition services, signature pages, related service page, location of services and statewide assessment, are missing. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Provision of Related Services- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that related services such as speech and language services, occupational therapy and physical therapy are not provided at the beginning of the school year.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that related services begin at the beginning of the school year and continue to the end of the school year. The plan must also include staff**

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

training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.

IEP Implementation- During the on-site visit, through classroom observations and record reviews, it was determined that the school operates preschool classes to provide inclusive opportunities for classified preschool-aged students. Some of these classes have a majority of regular education students in attendance. A review of IEPs for those students placed in this inclusive setting indicated that students are required to receive all services in a self-contained setting. None of the IEPs indicated that any of these preschool students would receive academic instruction with nondisabled peers.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs are implemented as written. If the receiving school believes that a student may benefit from an inclusive setting, the receiving school will notify the sending district to request an IEP meeting to allow the IEP team to discuss placement options for the student. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of descriptions of special class programs, special classes implementing IEPs, core curriculum content standards including core curriculum content standard for students with severe disabilities and provision of home instruction.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding class size/age range exceptions and medication/nursing services.

Areas of Need:

Instructional Class Size and Age Ranges- During the on-site visit, it was determined through classroom observation, teacher interviews and record reviews that instructional class sizes and age ranges in individual classes exceeded code requirements.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that instructional class sizes and age ranges will not exceed code requirements. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Exceptions- During the on-site visit, it was determined through interviews and record reviews that the school was not aware of the requirement regarding the need for exceptions for class sizes and age ranges that exceed those permitted by code.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that any necessary class size or age range exceptions are obtained by the sending school district. The school will not accept new students who exceed the class size or age range requirements without prior county approval of the required exceptions. The plan must include an**

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

administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.

Medication/Nursing Services- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school has not adopted the School Health Services Guidelines for delivery of nursing services.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school is in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the SCHI School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of return of pupil records, access sheets, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance and student health records.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding access to records and location of records.

Areas of Need:

Access to records- During the on-site visit it was determined through classroom observations and interviews that classroom aides have access to students records.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that access to student records is limited to appropriately certified staff members with educational responsibility. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Location of Records- During the on-site visit through interviews and record reviews it was determined that the school did not provide notations in the central files as to where other records are maintained.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that student records are maintained in a central file with notation as to where other records are maintained.**

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the School for Children for Hidden Intelligence (SCHI) School on December 9 and 10, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the SCHI 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 comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the receiving school was able to identify two 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the SCHI School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included staff development, annual reports, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP, related services, employment/job descriptions for paraprofessionals, fire drills, staff attendance at IEP meeting, signatures present on IEPs, IEP accessibility, informing staff of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of students, changes to program/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student placement, descriptions of special class programs, special classes implementing IEPs, core curriculum content standards including core curriculum content standard for students with severe disabilities, provision of home instruction, return of pupil records, access sheets, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the SCHI School identified areas of need regarding approved professional development plan and facility approvals.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding class program approval, licensed staff, private school dual employment, criminal history certificate of occupancy, health inspection, appropriate nursing station, IEP meetings conducted annually, current IEPs, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, IEP components concerning the provision of related services, IEP implementation, class size/age range exceptions, medication/nursing services, access to records and location of records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the SCHI School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.