

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

Receiving School: High Point School **County:** Bergen

Monitoring Dates: October 25-26, 2005

Monitoring Team: Ann Marie Bruder and Diane Mari

Background Information:

During the 2004–2005 school year, the High Point School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the High Point 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 High Point 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 individualized education programs (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 imposed by the Division of Finance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.1 through 4.16.

School Strengths:

The High Point School is commended for its dedicated staff members who provide a structured learning environment. Students receive two periods a day of one to one instruction to introduce new concepts or reinforce material not fully understood. The school also utilizes a computerized skills tutor program to reinforce skills and maintain academic progress.

The High Point School provides many classes for their students including culinary arts and driver's education. The school also encourages student participation in various

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schoolwide activities including the High Point Press, the school newspaper. Students also have the opportunity to have their artwork displayed at the VSA Arts of NJ. The High Point School has been involved with "Adopt a School Program" in which the students read to Kindergarten and First Grade students at the Jefferson Elementary School.

The school also hosts a luncheon for the students to demonstrate their artwork and culinary arts skills for their families and Child Study Teams of their sending districts. The students decorate the gym and have a five course meal for their guests.

The High Point School also provides a structured behavioral management system focusing on positive work habits, appropriate behavior, work completion, etc. Students develop confidence as they earn points throughout the thirteen periods during the school day. The school uses a five color level system as students earn privileges. The school has a strong career awareness component and provides counseling for all students.

The High Point School is also commended for its active community-based experiences. The school faculty and students have participated in food drives during the holiday season. The school also collected money for the United Way, Diabetes Foundation and Make a Wish Foundation.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

FAPE, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the High Point School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the High Point School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

An area of need was identified during the site visit regarding staff development.

Area of Need:

Staff Development – During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a review of records indicated that although the staff was provided with training at beginning of the school year, it did not address critical topics essential for newly hired staff, such as policies and procedures and health related issues.

- **The High Point School will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the school has staff development opportunities in the beginning of every school year to discuss policies and procedures and health related concerns with the staff. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the High Point School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, 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 and having an approved professional development plan.

During the on-site visit an area of need was identified regarding criminal history verification.

Area of Need:

Criminal History Verification- During the on-site visit, through a review of staff lists and documentation of criminal history record review, it was determined that the school does not have documentation of criminal history record review for all staff members employed by the school. Emergent hiring forms were not completed as the school awaited the criminal history verification of some employees.

- **The school will immediately review their current staff list and submit the requests for emergent hiring through the County Superintendent's Office for all staff members who require them. In addition, the school must revise their improvement plan to include procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that the school maintains documentation of criminal history for all members of their staff.**

Section V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the High Point School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, 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 goals and objectives.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components including current IEPs.

Areas of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components- During the on-site visit through staff interviews and a review of records, it was determined that the school does not communicate with sending districts when IEP components are missing. Areas consistently missing include least restrictive environment (LRE) statements, graduation requirements, transition, and statewide assessment information.

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In addition, during the on-site visit, through a review of records it was determined that, although the students had annual IEP meetings, the school did not have the most current IEP on file.

- **The school will review its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components such as LRE statements, graduation requirements, transition, and statewide assessment information are missing. In addition, the plan must include procedures to ensure that they communicate with sending districts when current IEPs have not been received by the school. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the High Point 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, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCSs), collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

During the self-assessment process, the High Point School identified concerns in the areas regarding medical exams for sports teams. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit in the area regarding dispensing of medication.

Area of Need:

Dispensing of Medication- During the on-site visit through staff interviews it was determined that medication was dispensed by the principal when the certified school nurse was absent.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that only authorized individuals dispense medication in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the High Point School on October 25-26, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the High Point School'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 exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the receiving school was able to identify most 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.

FAPE, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the High Point School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the High Point School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, certified/licensed staff, 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, having an approved professional development plan, IEP meeting conducted annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, 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, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, 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 High Point School identified one area of need regarding medical exams for sports teams.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding staff development, criminal history, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components including current IEPs, and dispensing of medication.

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the High Point School 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.