

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

**Receiving School:** Institute for Educational Achievement      **County:** Bergen

**Monitoring Dates:** December 13 – 14, 2004

**Monitoring Team:** Ann Marie Bruder and Gregory Margolis

**Background Information:**

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Institute for Educational Achievement conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Institute for Educational Achievement 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 Institute for Educational Achievement 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, parents and related service personnel.

**School Strengths:**

The Institute for Educational Achievement is commended for its significant degree of parental support. The teachers and staff provide instruction within the home and community for the students. Students receive weekly home visits to work on the development and generalization of skills. The staff also assists the families if the child is experiencing behavioral difficulties within the community. They assist in activities such as: training for family travel, taking the child for a hair cut, taking them shopping with the family, or taking them to the library. The appropriate behavior is reinforced and suggested strategies for success are offered. Goals and objectives are also incorporated within the IEP to work on home or community living skills. Staff members continue to be a resource for families until the appropriate skills are acquired and demonstrated.

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The Institute for Educational Achievement administration and staff also offer support services for the students who are transitioning back to their local school districts. The teachers and/or instructional aides accompany the student to the public school setting. Their on-going consultation with sending districts supports the students and allows for a successful transition.

While the Institute for Educational Achievement building was in the planning phases, the school's administrators provided ideas to the architects as to how the space should be used for students' maximum benefit. The school building is equipped with two computer labs, a gymnasium, and a central location in the middle of the lobby for meetings, assemblies and activities for students. It also has a life skills kitchen, laundry room, and a shower in the nurse's office to work on daily living and life skill activities.

The Institute for Educational Achievement also has a small class size, and provides one to one instruction for their students. The staff rotates, allowing each classroom staff member to have knowledge of each student capabilities, needs, and strategies best suited to every student. This low ratio of staff to students enhances instruction and assists in the generalization of skills within the school, home and community settings.

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

**General Provisions, FAPE, Facility Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Institute for Educational Achievement during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section III: Staff Requirements**

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

During self-assessment, the Institute for Educational Achievement accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the Institute for Educational Achievement identified concerns in the areas regarding criminal history verification. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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

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**Section VI: Discipline**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment, the Institute for Educational Achievement accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement.

During the self-assessment process, the Institute for Educational Achievement identified concerns in the areas regarding the communication of disciplinary procedures to districts and parents. 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 this area.

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

**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Institute for Educational Achievement 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 CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Institute for Educational Achievement identified concerns in the areas regarding nursing services. The receiving school school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Institute for Educational Achievement on December 13 – 14, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Institute for Educational Achievement'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 this review the receiving school was able to identify all areas of need and develop an appropriate improvement plan 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, all 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.

**General Provisions, FAPE, Facility Requirements, IEP/ Annual Review and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Institute for Educational Achievement during self-assessment and verified during the NJDOE on-site monitoring visit.

Additional areas of compliance include certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, having an approved professional development plan, procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement, 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, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Institute for Educational Achievement identified areas of need regarding criminal history, standard disciplinary procedures communicated to parents and sending school districts and nursing services.

The Institute for Educational Achievement is not required to submit revisions to their improvement plan since all areas of noncompliance have been identified and corrected by the school.