

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

Receiving School: Oakwood School **County:** Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: September 20, 2004

Monitoring Team: Karen Frumen and Carmen Fanucci

Background Information:

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

School Strengths:

The Oakwood School has been in operation 25 years. The school provides an intimate, nurturing environment with a small 3:1 student to staff ratio. Oakwood 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.

The Oakwood School offers performing and practical arts programs which are enhanced with a variety of computer technology and educational field trips to theatres, museums and lectures. There are five in-service training workshops per year where professionals from the community and local colleges are invited to help improve educational and therapeutic skills.

Students volunteer at the Neptune Food Bank, the Middletown "Bread Barn", the Ronald McDonald House and local nursing homes. Class trips are scheduled to local theaters and parks (Katari Environmental Center, Sandy Hook Marine Center) where students participate in leadership training and group problem-solving skills. Literature assignments are augmented by

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viewing theater productions at the Algonquin Theater and the NJ Performing Arts Center. Local bankers, businessmen and women and alumni are invited to present information about their careers and obtaining self-sufficiency.

Eligible students may enroll in the Fast Start Program at Brookdale Community College. Juniors and seniors, with an "A" average, take 3 to 6 credits per year and can matriculate into college after graduation with college credit. Results have indicated that many of the Fast Start students go on to either a two or four year college. Several years ago, Oakwood conducted a study in which they tried to assess "success" with their population. Based on several variables which included degrees of independent living, degrees of working and income, and general independence, they ascertained that a little more than 85% of the population was "somewhat independent" to "independent." Oakwood purports that, because they are now more focused on transition, their students will be even more successful.

Parents and students are encouraged to meet after school for counseling to address family issues. Approximately 15% of the population each year is transitioned back to sending districts, vocational schools, Monmouth County Vocational Rehabilitation centers and the Fast Start Program at Brookdale College.

Area Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Facility Requirements were determined to be areas of compliance by the Oakwood School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures. The 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 Oakwood 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 II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) and speech language services as per IEP.

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During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids and provision of counseling services as per IEP. The 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 Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the area regarding private school dual employment. The 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 Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing for support and assistance, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, statewide testing and current IEP prior to service delivery. The 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 Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

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Section VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding 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.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the area regarding standard disciplinary procedures. The 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 Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood 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, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and providing instruction in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction and dispensing medication.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the area regarding policies and procedures relating to school functions and services. The 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 Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding employment of a full-time school nurse.

Area of Need:

Certified School Nurse - During the on-site visit, staff interviews confirmed that the school's current nurse does not hold New Jersey Department of Education certification and is not employed full time as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(e).

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the required full range of nursing services is provided by employing a full time certified school nurse. The school may request a waiver of full time status through the Regulatory Equivalency and Waiver process in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1**

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Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Oakwood School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding; return of records upon termination, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office, and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified concerns in the area regarding conformance to pupil record code. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the Oakwood School has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Oakwood School on September 20 and 21, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Oakwood School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan. The Oakwood School is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the Oakwood School was able to identify all but one 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.

Area Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Facility Requirements were determined to be areas of compliance by the Oakwood School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Oakwood School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included staff development, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech language services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with age appropriate students, signatures of participants present on IEPs, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components, and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, 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, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, return of records upon termination, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Oakwood School identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, maintenance of hearing aids, provision of counseling services as per IEP, private school dual employment, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, statewide testing, current IEP prior to service delivery, standard disciplinary procedures and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

The on-site visit identified one additional area of need regarding the employment of a full-time certified school nurse.

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Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Oakwood 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.