

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

Receiving Schools: Creative Achievement Academy- Grape Street, Wood Street, West Avenue, Lake Road and Downe Academy

Counties: Cumberland and Gloucester

Monitoring Dates: December 8, 9, 10, 2003

Monitoring Team: Barbara Ciancaglini, Barbara Groff, Elaine Lerner Catherine Thomas, Judyth Vazquez, and Dolores Walther

Background Information:

During the 2002–2003 school-year, the Creative Achievement Academy, including the Grape Street, Wood Street, West Avenue, Lake Road and the Downe Academy campuses conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Creative Achievement Academy with an opportunity to evaluate 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 Creative Achievement Academy 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, related service personnel and school district case managers and administrators.

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

School Strengths:

The Creative Achievement Academy is commended for the many ways it attempts to involve the parents of enrolled students. Creative Achievement Academy uses multiple paths to contact and inform parents. House visitations are conducted by staff and administration, and transportation is provided to meetings and activities for those parents who request it.

Section I: General Provisions

Creative Achievement Academy

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified itself compliant in the areas of annual reports, amendments and provision of programs in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns in the area of in-service training needs. The schools' improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Creative Achievement Academy

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified itself compliant in the areas of services provided at no cost to parents and extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs.

During the self-assessment process, **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids, program open to observation by LEA and DOE and provision of related services. The schools' improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of maintenance of hearing aids and program open to observation by LEA and DOE. A review of records during the on-site visit confirmed that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for compliance in these areas. **The improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of provision of related services as per IEPs because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that services are provided and sufficiently documented as per IEPs. The plan must be revised to include these components.**

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

An additional area of need for **Creative Achievement** was identified during the on-site visit regarding length of school day and year.

Areas of Need:

Length of School Day and Year - During the on-site visit, through a review of the school calendar and staff interviews, it was determined that **Creative Achievement** maintains a 180 day school year calendar with eight shortened school days. Since the minimum of four hours of instructional time is not provided on these days, the school calendar falls short of the required minimum of 180 school days.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that instruction is provided for a minimum of four hours during 180 days per school year. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Grape Street

An additional area of need for **Grape Street** was identified during the on-site visit regarding provision of physical education.

Provision of Physical Education- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that **Grape Street** does not provide the required 150 minutes of health, physical education and safety.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school provides a minimum of 150 minutes of health, physical education and safety. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

Creative Achievement Academy

During self-assessment, the **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of supervision of physical therapy assistants and certified occupational therapy assistants, private school dual employment and supervision of paraprofessionals.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns in the areas of job description of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan. The schools' improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. A review

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

of records during the on-site visit confirmed that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for compliance in these areas.

Additional areas of need for **Creative Achievement Academy** were identified during the on-site visit in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff relating to nursing services and use of an unapproved clinic.

Areas of Need:

Nursing Services- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that the nurse does not possess Department of Education certification as a school nurse.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to employ a certified school nurse, or to develop a nursing services plan for review and approval by the county superintendent. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Use of an Unapproved Clinic- During the on site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that the school is contracting with an unapproved clinic to provide occupational therapy services.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school provides occupational therapy services either through an approved clinic or through a contractual arrangement with an appropriately certified/licensed individual. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Creative Achievement Academy

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified itself compliant in the area of programs provided in approved facilities.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns regarding certificates of occupancy and inspections. The schools' improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. A review of records during the on-site visit confirmed that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for compliance in these areas.

Additional areas of need were identified for **Creative Achievement Academy** during the on-site visit regarding frequency of fire drills (with the exception of

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

Downe Academy) and appropriate nurses' station (with the exception of **West Avenue**).

Areas of Need:

Frequency of Fire Drills - During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and a review of fire drill logs it was determined that **Grape Street, Wood Street, West Avenue** and **Lake Road** do not conduct at least two fire drills per month.

- **The schools will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that fire drills are conducted at least twice a month. The plan must 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 building confirmed that the nurses' stations located in **Grape Street, Wood Street, Lake Road** and **Downe Academy** is inadequate because they do not provide the required rest area and/or bathroom facilities.

- **The schools will immediately contact the county office of education for a facility review. In addition, the schools will revise its improvement plan to include activities to identify an appropriate location for the provision of nursing services, with final facility approval from the county office of education.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

Creative Achievement Academy

During self-assessment, the **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meetings conducted at least annually, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility, timely implementation of IEPs, administration of statewide testing and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns regarding IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, current IEPs prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities observation of proposed placement, district-wide assessment. The schools' improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of IEP conducted with appropriate participants, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, observation of proposed placement and district-wide assessment. **The schools' improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of current IEPs prior to service delivery because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that current IEPs are maintained at the school for all enrolled students. The schools'**

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

improvement plan is insufficient to address the area regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components because it lacks procedures, staff training, administrative oversight component and a mechanism to ensure that subject area and related services goals and objectives and anticipated frequency, location type and duration of related services are included in IEPs. The plan must be revised to include these components.

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

Section VI: Discipline

During self-assessment, the **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures for time-out rooms, 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 **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns in the area regarding standard disciplinary procedures. The improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. A review of records during the on-site visit confirmed that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for compliance in this area.

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

Grape Street

An additional area of need for **Grape Street** was identified during the on-site visit regarding training staff in the use of personal restraints.

Personal restraints- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that the staff does not have knowledge as to who is to administer personal restraints when needed for students. In addition, the school does not ensure that staff members are trained in restraints on an annual basis.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all staff members responsible for administering restraints are appropriately trained in approved techniques for personal restraints. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that only appropriately trained staff members administer restraints.**

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Creative Achievement Academy

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of special class programs implementing IEPs and collaboration for home instruction.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified concerns in the areas regarding class size/age range, exceptions for class/sizes and age ranges and teachers trained and instructing in core curriculum content standards (CCCS). The school has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to meet these areas of need. A review of records during the on-site visit confirmed that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for compliance in these areas.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding nursing services.

Areas of Need

Medication/Nursing Services- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and observations it was determined that **Grape Street, Wood Street and West Avenue** do not have certified school nurses on-site to implement N.J.A.C. 6A:16. The **Lake School** has a physician in place of a school nurse and **Downe Academy** campus did not employ any nurse.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that N.J.A.C. 6A:16 requirements are implemented with a certified school nurse as required for specified activities or develop a nursing services plan for review and approval by the county superintendent. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: Student Records

Creative Achievement Academy

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, **Creative Achievement Academy** accurately identified itself compliant in the areas regarding location of records and daily attendance.

During the self-assessment process the **Creative Achievement Academy** identified areas of need regarding conformance to pupil record code, including return of records, access to records, access sheets, notice of excessive tardiness/absences, written notification of attendance and mandated health

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

records. The receiving school improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of written notification of attendance. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of conformance to pupil record code, return of records and access sheets, because it lacks documentation of activities to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of notice of excessive tardiness/absences because it lacks administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan in the area of mandated student records is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks documentation and administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures. In addition, timelines for activities are inappropriate for mandated health records and must be modified. The plan must be revised to include these components.**

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the area regarding confidentiality of student records.

Areas of Need

Confidentiality of Student Records- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and record reviews it was determined that student records identified the names of other students in items such as correspondence and disciplinary reports. During the on-site visit, staff members were initiating correction in this area prior to the completion of the on-site monitoring.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school maintains student records that do not identify other students' names. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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

Summary

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 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. In addition, the school should be recognized for efforts made in correcting areas identified through the self-assessment process.

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the **Creative Achievement Academy** on December 8, 9, 10, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Creative Achievement Academy's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

Creative Achievement Academy

Areas identified as consistently compliant by all **Creative Achievement Academy** schools during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included annual reports, amendments, provision of programs in nonsectarian settings, services provided to children at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, provision of related services, supervision of physical therapy assistants and certified occupational therapy assistants, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, programs provided in approved facilities, IEP meetings conducted at least annually, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility, timely implementation of IEPs, statewide testing, progress reports, procedures for time-out rooms, removal of student pending mediation and due process, change in program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student, special class programs implementing IEPs, collaboration for home instruction, location of records and daily attendance.

During the self-assessment process, the **Creative Achievement Academy**, identified concerns in the areas of policies and procedures relating to joint training of staff and parents, maintenance of hearing aids, observation of programs by LEA and DOE, job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, certificates of occupancy and inspections, IEPs conducted with required receiving school participants, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication with districts regarding IEP components, informing teachers/provides of IEP responsibilities, observation of proposed placement, district wide assessment, standard disciplinary procedures, class size/age range, exceptions for class/sizes and age ranges, teachers trained and instructing in core curriculum content

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

standards (CCCS), conformance to pupil record code, including return of records, access to records, access sheets, notice of excessive tardiness/absences, written notification of attendance and mandated health records.

Areas of need identified during the onsite visit for the **Creative Achievement Academy** include length of school day and year, nursing services, use of unapproved clinic, nurses' stations (with the exception of **West Avenue**), frequency of fire drills (with the exception of **Downe Academy**), medication and nursing services and confidentiality of student records.

Grape Street

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards at **Grape Street** regarding provision of physical education and personal restraints.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the **Creative Achievement Academy** 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.

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

Addendum to Monitoring Report
10/31/2005

Subsequent to the on-site visit of December 2003 and issuance of the monitoring report dated January 26, 2004, the school provided additional documentation on the findings regarding length of school day and year. The school is now compliant for this area of need.