

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

Receiving School: Benway School

County: Passaic

Monitoring Dates: January 10-11, 2005

Monitoring Team: Diane Mari, Janet Wright, Zola Mills

Background Information:

During the 2003 – 2004 school year, the Benway School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Benway 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 Benway 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 Benway School is commended for its community based service component. Teachers mentor student participation as volunteers with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Bloomingdale Animal Shelter, Llanfair Nursing Home, Paterson Food Bank and Pass It Along. The school should also be commended for the fund raising efforts to support a Food Pantry in South Africa.

The Benway School also provides much assistance to the students choosing to apply to college or other types of schools after graduation. The students are afforded help with applications, obtaining grants and scholarships. The Benway School appears to have an impressive success rate indicated by the variety of schools the graduates attend.

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Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

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

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the Benway School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures and staff development. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. Prior to the on-site visit, it was determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in the area regarding policies and procedures.

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 Benway 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 program open to observation by LEA and DOE and provision of speech language services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Benway School identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site regarding provision of services as per IEP.

Area of Need:

Provision of Services as per IEP – During the on-site visit through staff interviews and a review of IEPs it was determined that counseling services were not being provided as per IEP.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school provides counseling services in accordance with IEPs. The plan will include a mechanism to review all IEPs and ensure that the duration and frequency of the service provided match the requirement indicated in the IEP. The plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Benway School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding private school dual employment, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office and having an approved professional development plan.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the area regarding certified/licensed staff and criminal history verification.

Areas of Need:

Certified/Licensed Staff- During the on site visit, a review of records determined that teacher aides are supervising in-school suspension students and supervising students' lessons without a certified teacher present.

- **Within 45 days, the school will review their staff list and ensure that all staff members are appropriately certified for the positions they hold. In addition, the school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all staff members continue to function in the appropriate capacity for which they are certified. The plan must also include procedures to ensure that paraprofessional staff members are supervised by certified staff. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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

- **The school will immediately review their current staff list and submit a Criminal History Emergent Hiring form to County Superintendent's Office for all staff members who do not have a Criminal History Review approval letter on file. 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 verification for all staff members.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Benway School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meetings conducted at least annually, required signatures present on IEPs, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, 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, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives and current IEPs.

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An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding IEP participants.

Area of Need:

IEP Meeting Held With Appropriate Participants- During the on-site visit, through record reviews, it was determined that teachers were not consistently attending IEP meetings.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure teachers attend IEP meetings. 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 Benway School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding special class program descriptions maintained at county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

During the self-assessment process, the Benway School identified concerns in the areas regarding teachers trained and instructing in core curriculum content standards and class size/ age range exceptions. The improvement plan was sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding employment of a school nurse and appropriate nursing facility.

Areas of Need:

Dispensing Medication/Nursing Services- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews it was determined that the school does not employ a full time certified school nurse 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 plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Nursing Facility- During a tour of the school building, it was determined that the nursing facility, located in the school's main office, does not have a privacy area or running water. The school identified an appropriate location for the nursing facility but the area requires some additional modifications including a replacement door and a privacy screen.

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- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the school obtains final facility approval from the county office of education for the nursing facility. The plan must include administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the Benway School identified concerns in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records determined that the 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 Benway School on January 10-11, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Benway 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 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.

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

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Benway School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included 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, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of speech language services as per IEP, private school dual employment, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, having an approved professional development plan, IEP meetings conducted at least annually, required signatures present on IEP's, IEP conducted with students 14 and older, as appropriate, 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 relating to administration, statewide testing for support and assistance, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, current IEP's, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction ,policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, return of records upon termination , access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Benway School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures and staff development, maintenance of hearing aids, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, class size/age range exceptions and conformance to pupil record code.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding provision of services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, criminal history verification, IEP meetings held with appropriate participants, nursing services and nursing facilities.

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