

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

Receiving School: Lakeview Learning Center

County: Passaic

Monitoring Dates: November 17 and 19, 2003

Monitoring Team: Elaine Lerner, Jennifer DeSaye, and Ann Marie Bruder

Background Information:

During the 2002–2003 school year, the Lakeview Learning Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Lakeview Learning Center 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 Lakeview Learning Center 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 IEP's, 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 and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Lakeview Learning Center is commended for the commitment and dedication of the many enthusiastic and professional faculty and staff. The Lakeview Learning Center provides its teachers and staff with intensive professional development. Many of the presenters that the school brings in are leaders in the education, curriculum or behavior remediation fields. Lakeview Learning Center recently completed a comprehensive review of their curriculum, with special attention to teaching methodologies in the area of science. The staff also receives extensive training in working with students with emotional or multiple disabilities.

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The Lakeview Learning Center is commended for their comprehensive school wide individual behavior modification system which emphasizes positive reinforcement, privileges, rewards and trips.

The school's transition program provides services to the students in a variety of settings in order to deliver a full choice of pre-vocational opportunities including: culinary arts/food service, auto mechanics, landscaping, horticulture, plumbing, building trades, technology/computer repair. Lakeview Learning Center also has a Cooperative Industrial Education (CIE) Work Study Program. The CIE teacher specializes in specific vocational areas, assists in placements for the work study program, and mentors the students at their job sites. The school tracks the success of its students in post secondary employment situations related to their work study training.

Computers, located in all classrooms, are integrated into the curriculum and are widely used by the students throughout the program. Counseling is a related service offered to all students and is infused in the program. Lakeview Learning Center also employs child study team members specifically for the purpose of acting as a liaison to the sending districts and for supporting the curriculum and therapeutic environment.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Facility Requirements and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Lakeview Learning Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and provision of programs in a nonsectarian setting.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview Learning Center identified concerns in the areas regarding staff development and parent training. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.**

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 Lakeview Learning Center accurately identified themselves as compliant in the areas of length of school day/year, physical education, services at no cost to the parents, observation of programs, provision of services as per the IEP, and the related service of counseling.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding a procedure for maintenance of hearing aids.

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Area of Need:

Policy and Procedure for Maintenance of Hearing Aids - During the on site visit, through interviews and a review of documentation of Lakeview Learning Center's current policies and procedures, it was determined that the school does not have a policy and procedure for the maintenance of hearing aids.

- **The receiving school will develop a policy and procedure to ensure that hearing aids are functioning properly and will provide staff training when students who use hearing aids are enrolled in the school.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview Learning Center accurately identified themselves as compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, dual employment, employment/job descriptions of classroom aides, and criminal history verification.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding approval for professional development plan.

Area of Need:

Approval for Professional Development – During the on-site visit, staff interviews and review of records indicated that Lakeview Learning Center does not have a professional development plan approved by the county professional development board.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school has a professional development plan approved by the County Professional Development Board to enable certified staff to complete the 100 professional development hours needed to maintain their certification. The plan must include administrative oversight to ensure consistent implementation of procedures.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meetings held annually, IEPs held with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, informing staff of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementing the IEP, statewide testing, observation of proposed placements, implementation of IEP components, and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview Learning Center identified concerns regarding IEP meetings conducted with appropriate participants relating to transition agencies. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure**

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the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding criteria for mastery of goals and objectives and communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components.

Area of Need:

Criteria for Mastery of Goals and Objectives - During the on-site visit, a review of records indicated that the receiving school is providing IEP annual goals and objectives to the IEP team that, while aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), lacked criteria for being observable or measurable.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable terms. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components –During the on-sight visit, a review of student records revealed that the school does not communicate with sending districts when IEP components are missing from student’s IEPs. Areas consistently missing include goals and objectives for related services, statement of special education and related services, participation in statewide assessment, graduation requirements, LRE statement, extended school year consideration, and courses of study.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include the procedures to ensure that they communicate with the sending districts when IEP components are missing. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Section VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment the Lakeview Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student 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 Lakeview Learning Center’s improvement plan identified concerns in the area regarding short term removals of a student. **The receiving school’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent,**

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compliant implementation of the procedure. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit in the area of procedures for time out room.

Area of Need:

Time Out Room - During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a review of records indicated that the school operates an in-school suspension or time out room. Although the staff implements procedures for the time out room, they are not written in the teacher or student handbook.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to ensure that they incorporate written procedures for the use of time out rooms into their student and staff handbook. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Lakeview Learning Center 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 the county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained in the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCSs), teachers instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview Learning Center identified concerns in the areas regarding nursing services and dispensing of medication. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Lakeview Learning Center on November 17, 2003 and November 19, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Lakeview Learning Center's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The Lakeview Learning Center 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 nearly all areas of needs 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Lakeview Learning Center self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day and year, physical education, services at no cost to the parents, extended school year, observation of programs, provision of services as per the IEP, related services: counseling, certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employments, paraprofessionals, criminal history, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, signatures present on IEP's, current IEP, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, changes to program placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student, class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEP, core curriculum content standards, home instruction, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access to records, access sheets, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Lakeview Learning Center identified areas of need regarding staff development, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, removal of students, nursing services and dispensing of medication.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards of programs provided in hearing aids, professional development approval for the county office, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, criteria for measuring goals and objectives in the IEPs, and written policies/procedures for in-school suspension/time out room.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Lakeview Learning Center will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs and County Office of education to address those areas that require revisions.