

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

**Receiving School:** Reed Academy

**County:** Bergen

**Monitoring Dates:** October 24, 2005

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

**Background Information:**

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Reed Academy conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Reed Academy 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 Reed 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 and related service personnel.

Noncompliant items reflected in this report may result in nonallowable costs imposed by the Division of Finance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.1 through 4.16.

**School Strengths:**

The Reed Academy is commended for providing a significant amount of parental support. The staff provides parent training in a variety of areas including: script fading, motivational techniques, appropriate goal setting, and basic learning interventions that can be generalized to the home setting. Parents may receive additional hands on training three hours a month on interventions that assist in the generalization of skills. The teachers also conduct home visits and provide family supports during community experiences such as: going to the dentist, attending extra-curricular community outings (YMCA for swimming), visits to local stores, or going for a haircut since these activities

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may be difficult for families without the necessary strategies and support reinforcing appropriate behavior. The school also established an extra-curricular art program available for the students after school hours.

The Reed Academy also provides a comprehensive approach to model and encourage appropriate student behavior. The school utilizes a positive support strategy for its students. They also incorporate a peer interaction approach that emphasizes peer modeling, peer imitation and verbal interaction. The school has developed a relationship with local school districts that allows general education students to come to Reed Academy for play based experiences to provide opportunities for social interaction and to promote the development of social skills.

The staff of Reed Academy is commended for their commitment and dedication to the program and the students they service. They are enthusiastic and caring as they provide instruction and work on the generalization of skills during school hours and during the provision of home visitation or community experiences. The administration is extremely supportive of staff and is involved in the mentoring of all personnel.

Reed Academy provides outreach to sending school districts as they arrange for districts to come to the school to visit one day per month. This allows the child study team to be familiar with the students' program and to see the progress being attained first hand. The receiving school also encourages students to return to their school district to participate in opportunities for inclusion. There is currently a student who attends his local district on a shared time basis.

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

**General Provisions, Facility Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, and Discipline** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Reed Academy during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

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

During self-assessment, the Reed Academy 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) services as per IEP, provision of physical therapy (PT) services as per IEP, provision of speech language services as per IEP, and provision of counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Reed Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding hearing aid 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 school has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding a student evaluation upon entry into the program to determine present functioning levels for students.

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**Area of Need:**

**Provision of Evaluations** – During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews, it was determined that the receiving school’s teachers, in collaboration with the director, are conducting formal evaluations that are the responsibility of the sending districts.

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when staff members believe that a student may require a formal assessment, a referral to the child study team is made. The school may conduct informal or teacher-generated tests to assess student’s levels. The plan must include in-service training for the staff regarding the new procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section III: Staff Requirements**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Reed Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, and supervision of paraprofessionals.

During the self-assessment process, receiving school identified concerns regarding job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, and having an approved professional development plan. The receiving school’s improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified.

**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Reed Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, 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 Reed Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding special class program descriptions maintained at county office. The receiving school’s improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding teachers trained in Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) and nursing services.

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**Areas of Need:**

**Teacher Training in CCCS** – During the on-site visit record review and staff interviews indicated that the school staff members were not consistently knowledgeable in the implementation of the CCCS.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that staff members are trained and provide instruction in the CCCS. The plan must include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Certified School Nurse** – During the on-site visit, staff interviews confirmed that the school does not employ a full-time certified nurse as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1 (e).

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures 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 the full-time status through the Regulatory Equivalency and Waiver process in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1.**

**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Reed Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access to records is limited to authorized persons, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs and written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences.

During the self-assessment process, the Reed Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding access to student records.

**Area of Need:**

**Access to Student Records** – During the on-site visit, through record review and staff interviews, it was determined that access sheets were not available in the students' individual records.

- **The receiving school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that access sheets are included in the students' files. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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**Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at Reed Academy on October 24, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Reed Academy'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 identified most areas of need and developed an improvement plan that, with some revision, will bring about systemic change. In addition, the school should be commended for the prompt correction of all identified areas of need. 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

**General Provisions, Facility Requirements, IEP/Annual Review and Discipline** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Reed Academy during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Reed Academy during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included 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 therapy and counseling services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, and written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences.

During the self-assessment process, the Reed Academy identified areas of need regarding a hearing aid procedure, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding provision of evaluations, teachers trained in the Core Curriculum Content Standards, nursing services/certified school nurse, and access to records.

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