Code # 191
(office use only)

NEW JERSEY

2000-2001 Guidelines and Application

BEST PRACTICES

Deadline for Application to County Office: NOVEMBER 27, 2000

The Best Practices application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page and page 2, if applicable.

Category Special Education (Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name Student Self Advocacy
Number of Schools with Practice -1- (If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	Hudson
District (Proper Name)	Bayonne Public School
Address	Avenue A and 29th Street Street/P. O. Box
	Bayonne, NJ 07002 City Zip Code
Telephone	201-858-5817 Fax 201-858-6289 Email
Chief School Administrator	Dr. Patricia L. McGeehan
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	Bayonne High School
Address	Avenue A and 29th Street Street/P. O. Box
	Bayonne, NJ 07002 City Zip Code
Telephone	201-858-5900 Fax 201-858-6246 Email
Principal	Dr. Michael A. Wanko
Program Developer(s)	Larry Steinman
Application Prepared By	Larry Steinman
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	Patricia L. McGeehan

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: ✓ Yes ___ No **County Superintendent's Signature** Robert Osak

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Code # _____
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NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

1. **RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements
2. **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
3. Application must be **keyboarded on 8 ½" x 11" white paper, portrait** format. **Twelve-point or larger computer font** or **fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font** must be used. (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)
4. **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to all the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages. Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response.** Format your response for accuracy and clarity.
5. **The information on page 4 and the responses** to statements must be copied **on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable)** must be copied **on one side of the page.** Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
6. **The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.**
7. **The original and seven copies of the application** must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by **November 27, 2000**, with the **Itemized List of District Applications** form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:

Type of School	Grade Levels	
___ Elementary School	_____	**Practice Name** Student Self Advocacy
___ Middle School	_____	Number of Schools with Practice -1-
___ Junior High School	_____	**Number of Districts with Practice** -1-
X High School	9-12	**Location** X Urban/City __ Suburban With Urban Charcteristics
___ Other: _____	_____	__ Suburban __ Small City/Town __ Rural

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.

___ Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	___ Educational Technology	___ Safe Learning Environment
___ Assessment/Evaluation	___ Gifted and Talented Programs	___ School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
___ Bilingual Education and Diversity	___ Health and Physical Education	___ Science
___ Citizenship/Character Education	___ Language Arts Literacy	___ Social Studies
___ Early Childhood Education Programs	___ Mathematics	X Special Education
___ Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs	___ Professional Development	___ World Languages
	___ Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards,** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the ***Core Curriculum Content Standards*** published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at http://www.state.nj.us/education.

Describe the practice proposed for recognition and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The Student Self Advocacy Team is a student run volunteer organization supervised by the transition specialist. It is recognized at the high school, along with other clubs. Students receive activity credit towards graduation through their participation in SSAT. It serves the classified students in grades 7-12. The **objectives** of the group are:

- To create a volunteer student population that is educated in the legislation that affects the special needs students' right to an education based on need
- To provide for the development and training for student advocates
- To create a mentor environment for students with disabilities
- To empower students to take charge of their career planning through IEP meetings

Students are schooled through peer instruction on how laws work to guarantee a student's rights to an appropriate education as well as to provide for accommodations at college and the work place. They receive information regarding IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as information on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is **innovative** in its approach. Beginning with students in grades 7-12, it creates a mentor pathway to advocacy. Once advocacy occurs, the students gain knowledge about themselves that begins with an understanding of the classification system as well as an understanding of the IEP process. They learn to take ownership of their actions as well as participate in transition plans for their future. The student run advocacy program called SSAT begins in grade 7. The transition specialist administers an evaluative survey. Trained members of the high school Student Self Advocacy Team (SSAT) are introduced as peer mentors. They reach out to students via spring workshops and by presenting seminars on disabilities in the elementary schools. They also administer informal interest inventories and share their personal educational stories as classified students. In the fall, high school members of SSAT meet eighth grades to talk about the opportunities at high school. They underscore that high school is not an end but the beginning of the process leading to adulthood. In the 8th grade, the transition specialist administers a follow up survey to measure growth. High school SSAT mentors also discuss the transition issues which faced them in high school as a result of their disability as well as the challenges that they will face in the future.

List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

The SSAT program addresses the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the following areas:

- Visual and Performing Arts (1.6) through monthly seminars and presentations to students in grades 7-12.
- Language Arts Literacy (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) through daily student out reach, development of publicity, recruitment activities, developing speeches and researching the laws.
- Social Studies (6.1) through practicing democratic citizenship and analyzing and applying information about public issues.
- Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards 1-5. Students develop career planning and workplace readiness skills through self assessment and interest inventories. Through the use of overheads, power point presentations and the web students are addressing standard 2: the use of information, technology, and other tools. Students problem solve and use critical thinking and decision making skills in preparing their presentations and creating the informal interest inventories, (standard 3), Standard 4, all students will demonstrate self-management skills is one of the key elements of the program. Students work cooperatively to determine a comfortable self-management style. Safety, standard 5, is paramount to the success of the program. Students learn the importance of a safe work environment.

Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and date to show how the practice met these needs.

The Student Self Advocacy Team was developed to address the **need** of students with disabilities to acquire the necessary skills to transition to high school and careers. They include advocacy, self determination and empowerment. Research indicates that

classified students lack advocacy skills. This program is an attempt to give students the skills they need for self determination and empowerment.

Assessments include:

- Pre/Post assessments of knowledge of legislation
- Interest Inventories (student generated)
- Career Battery (ACT)
- Observations by CST, Transition Specialist, and other professionals
- Student Self Evaluation
- Documentation of students fully participating in their IEP process

Supporting data: For the 1999-2000 academic year, there were 50 students who participated in the SSAT program. Of that number, 48% completed the pre/post assessments; 100% participated in the interest inventories and the career batteries. Of the exiting eighth graders, 92% fully participated in their IEP meetings through mentored planning as a result of the program. **Observations** by CST, transition specialist and other professionals identified 80% of the students feeling secure about their program choices and career goals. High school SSAT mentors successfully maintained relationships with transitioning students through the first year of high school. These high school students have now acquired the skills, which allow them to take leadership roles whereby they meet with groups of teachers, other students, parents and business leaders.

Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

This program can be **replicated** by the following:

- Select faculty advisor who will assess student population for advocacy knowledge before beginning
- Take referrals from professionals of students who would like to participate
- Set up the group to be a recognized school organization (students receive activity credit for participation)
- Contact Learning Disability Association for materials on advocacy
- Access internet for IDEA, 504 and other legislation for advocacy issues and accommodations

. The SSAT can be easily replicated by following the program description outlined above. Technical assistance is available at the web site address www.sam.is-here.net

During the spring term mentors administer an informal transition survey that focuses on the students' knowledge of disability and transition issues. During the summer the mentors conduct orientation activities with the incoming freshmen. In grades 9-12, students meet monthly to discuss issues that arise regarding their disability, their learning needs and styles, as well as appropriate advocacy styles. Students are given another interest inventory in grade 10 and a career battery is offered to them in grade 11. Students are also given committee assignments. These committees work cooperatively on research activities regarding legislation, advocacy issues, out reach and marketing the mentor service to the classified students in grades 7-12. As part of the program, students have created and manage a web site that contains information on transition issues, current legislation, accommodations, college and career planning and an e mail support network. During the past few years, other high school advocate groups in the region have been linked to the web site.

These innovative activities have resulted in a high level of student achievement as evidenced in the increased numbers of participants in the SSAT program this year. The group has also been invited to meet with college students and other high school students at transition conferences to present their unique, innovative program. The culminating activity is a conference at the end of the year for students with disabilities. It is organized entirely by the students. At that time, students complete part 2 of the transition survey. The members of the SSAT team also participate in a self evaluation of the program each year and before graduation to determine their level of self awareness