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Department of Education
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College Achieve Paterson Charter School
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New Jersey K to 12 Education

Collaborative Monitoring Report
June 2020

District: College Achieve Paterson Charter School
County: Passaic
Dates On-Site: January 30, 2020
Case #: FM-005-20

Funding Sources

Program	Funding Award
Title I, Part A	\$473,953
Title III	77,310
IDEA Basic	100,286
IDEA Preschool	2,122
Total Funds	<u>\$653,671</u>

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Background

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and other federal laws require that districts provide programs and services based on the requirements specified in each of the authorizing statutes (i.e., ESSA and IDEA). The laws further require that state education agencies such as the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) monitor the implementation of federal programs by subrecipients and determine whether the funds are being used by the school for their intended purposes and achieving the overall objectives of the funding initiatives.

Introduction

The NJDOE visited the College Achieve Paterson Charter School to monitor the school use of federal funds and the related program plans, where applicable, to determine whether the school's programs are meeting the intended purposes and objectives, as specified in the current year's applications and authorizing statutes and to determine whether the funds were spent in accordance with the program requirements, federal and state laws, and applicable regulations. The on-site visit included staff interviews and documentation reviews related to the requirements of the following programs: Title I, Title III, IDEA Basic and IDEA Preschool for the period July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

The scope of work performed included the review of documentation including grant applications, program plans and needs assessments, grant awards, annual audits, board minutes, payroll records, accounting records, purchase orders, a review of student records, classroom visitations and interviews with instructional staff to verify implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), a review of student class and related service schedules, interviews of child study team members and speech-language specialists and an interview of the program administrator regarding the IDEA grant, as well as current school policies and procedures. The monitoring team members also conducted interviews with school personnel, reviewed the supporting documentation for a sample of expenditures and conducted internal control reviews.

Expenditures Reviewed

The grants reviewed included Title I, Title III, IDEA Basic and IDEA Preschool from July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. A sampling of purchase orders and/or salaries was taken from each program reviewed.

General District Overview of Uses of Federal Funds

Title I Projects

The College Achieve Paterson Charter School serves grades K-7 and operates a targeted assistance program. The established entrance and exit criteria for the charter school included

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state assessments and benchmark assessments. During the 2019-2020 school year, the charter school programmed and budgeted its Title I, Part A allocation for the following activities: 1) Extended Day/Year Programs for Title I Students; 2) Professional Development; 3) Parent and Family Engagement; and 4) Instructional Materials/Supplies for the Title I program.

Title III Projects

Due to the emergency closure of New Jersey Public Schools the review of Title III could not be completed.

IDEA Grant:

The FY 2020 IDEA Basic funds are being used to pay contracted service providers for Child Study Team (CST) services as well as related services.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

Title I

Finding 1:

College Achieve Paterson Charter School did not provide documented evidence of its Annual Title I meeting for parents and families of participating children, including showing the inclusion of 1) invitational letter/flyer; 2) meeting agenda; 3) meeting minutes; and 4) sign-in sheets. Per the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation, a Title I-funded school must convene an annual meeting at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of this meeting is to inform parents and families of the school's Title I, Part A program(s), the Title I, Part A legislative requirements, and the ways in which parents and families can be engaged actively in helping their children succeed academically.

Citation:

ESEA §1116(c) Parent and Family Engagement: Policy Involvement

Required Action:

For the 2020-2021 school year, College Achieve Paterson Charter School must convene its Annual Title I Parent meeting for parents and families of participating children to review documentation of annual reviews to be conducted within a period of time to be determined later. The charter school must keep on file documentation to verify the meeting's occurrence (i.e., invitational letter/flyer, meeting agenda, meeting minutes, and sign-in sheets). This documentation must be made available to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs, upon request.

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Finding 2:

College Achieve Paterson Charter School did not provide documented evidence of its district-school level parent and family engagement policy for the FY 2020 ESEA project period, to include when this policy was distributed to parents and families. Per ESEA legislation, parents and families must be involved in the development of the written district-school level parent and family engagement policy, as well as be informed of ways they can further participate in the academic performance and achievement of their children.

Citation:

ESEA §1116 (a)(2): Local Educational Agency Policy: Written Policy; ESEA §1116(b)(1): School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Required Action:

For the 2020-2021 school year, College Achieve Paterson Charter School must engage parents and families in the development of a district-school level parent and family engagement policy. In addition, the charter school must ensure it distributes its written district-school level parent and family engagement policy to all parents and families of participating children. The charter school must keep on file documentation to verify parents and families were involved in the development of the written district-school level parent and family engagement policy, as well as documentation to verify distribution of this policy. This documentation must be made available to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs, upon request.

Recommended Action:

To further enhance knowledge regarding meaningful and timely parent and family engagement, it is recommended that the College Achieve Paterson Charter School staff review the parent and family engagement resources available on the NJDOE website at [Title I, Part A Parent Family Engagement](#). For additional assistance, please contact the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs at titleone@doe.nj.gov.

Finding 3:

College Achieve Paterson Charter School did not provide documented evidence of the development and distribution of its school-parent compact. The school-parent compact must outline how parents, the entire charter school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the charter school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the challenging State academic standards. The exclusion of parents and families in the development of the school-parent compact resulted in these stakeholders being excluded from active participation in their children's educational programs.

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Citation:

ESEA §1116(d)(2): Parent and Family Engagement (Shared responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement).

Required Action:

For the 2020-2021 school year, College Achieve Paterson Charter School must develop jointly, agree on, and distribute to parents and families of participating children its written school-parent compact. Parents and families shall be notified of the school-parent compact in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable, provided in a language they can understand. The charter school must keep on file documentation to verify the distribution of the school-parent compact to the parents and families of participating children. This documentation must be made available to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs, upon request.

Recommended Action:

To further enhance knowledge regarding meaningful and timely parent and family engagement, it is recommended that the College Achieve Paterson Charter School staff review the parent and family engagement resources available on the NJDOE website at [Title I, Part A Parent Family Engagement](#). For additional assistance, please contact the Office of Supplemental Educational Services at titleone@doe.nj.gov.

IDEA (Special Education)

There were no findings with the IDEA grant.

IDEA PROGRAM:

Finding 4:

The school does not employ child study team members who are employees of a local education agency. Primary child study team services are provided by contracted independent consultants.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.1(b) and 5.1(a)1, 2 and 3.

Required Action:

The school must ensure that all child study team members are employees of a district board of education. The school must secure the services of a Learning Disabilities Teaching Consultant, School Psychologist, and Social Worker through a contract or joint agreement with a local school district, educational services commission, jointure commission or special services school district to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site

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visit to interview staff and review employment documentation for the child study team members.

Finding 5:

The school did not consistently provide parents of students referred and/or eligible for special education and related services and referred and/or eligible for speech-language services notice of a meeting for identification, eligibility, reevaluation planning and IEP team meetings.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)3,5; 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).

Required Action:

The school must provide parents notice of a meeting in writing early enough to ensure they have an opportunity to attend. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review meeting documentation from meetings conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 6:

The school did not consistently conduct identification meetings within 20 calendar days of the receipt of a written request for evaluation for special education and related services and speech-language services to determine if an evaluation was warranted.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.5(b)6; 3.3(e) and 3.6(b).

Required Action:

The school must ensure identification meetings are conducted within 20 calendar days of the receipt of a written request for evaluation. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review meeting documentation from meetings conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 7:

The school did not consistently conduct reevaluations within three years of the previous classification date for students referred for special education and related services.

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Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8(a)

Required Action:

The school must ensure reevaluations are conducted within required timelines. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review documentation of eligibility meetings held as part of the reevaluation process for meetings to be conducted at a time to be determined later. A review of the oversight procedures will also take place at that later time.

Finding 8:

The school did not consistently conduct multidisciplinary initial evaluations for students referred for speech-language services by obtaining an educational impact statement from the classroom teacher.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.5(b)6 and 3.6(b).

Required Action:

The school must ensure a multidisciplinary evaluation is conducted for students referred for speech-language services by obtaining a written statement from the general education teacher that details the educational impact of the speech problem on the student's progress in general education. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review initial evaluation reports for students referred for speech-language services between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 9:

The school did not consistently conduct all required sections of the functional assessment as a component of initial evaluations for students referred for special education and related services and for students referred for speech-language services. Initial evaluation reports did not contain observations in non-testing setting, parent interview, teacher interview, a review of prior interventions documented by the teacher(s) or others who work with the student, and other informal measures.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(f)4(i-vi); 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(4) and (5); and 34 CFR §300.306(c)(i).

Required Action:

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The school must ensure all components of the functional assessment are conducted as part of all initial evaluations. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. The school is referred to the sample report form for speech-language evaluations which is located at:

www.state.nj.us/education/speced/forms. Monitors from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review initial evaluation reports for students evaluated between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 10:

The school did not consistently document all required considerations and statements in the IEPs of students eligible for special education and related services and for students eligible for speech-language services.

IEPs for students eligible for special education and related services did not consistently include:

- for students 14 and older, documentation of the student's strengths, interests and preferences
- participation in district wide assessments
- approved accommodations and modification on district wide assessments
- results of most recent evaluation.

IEPs for students eligible for speech-language services did not consistently include:

- status in speech-language performance, including how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in general education
- other academic and functional needs that result from the student's disability

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e) 1-17, and (f); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(A)(B); and 34 CFR §300.324(a)(1)(2).

Required Action:

The school must ensure each IEP contains the required considerations and statements. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for those specific students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs, along with a sample of

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IEPs for students whose annual review meetings were conducted between December 2020 and March 2021 and review the oversight procedures. For assistance with correction of noncompliance the school is referred to the state IEP sample forms which are located at: www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/forms. The names of the students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant will be provided to the school by the special education monitor.

Finding 11:

The school did not consistently convene meetings with required participants for students referred and/or eligible for special education and related services and for students referred and/or eligible for speech-language services.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)1(i-vii), 2(i-x); 3.3(e); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(B); and 34 CFR §300.321(a).

Required Action:

The school must ensure all meetings are conducted with required participants and documentation of participation is maintained in students' records. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review meeting documentation, for meeting conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 12:

The school did not obtain parental consent to evaluate prior to conducting assessments as part of an initial evaluation for students referred to speech-language services.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4 (a)3(b)

Required Action:

The school must ensure that parental consent to evaluate is obtained prior to conducting assessments as part of the initial evaluation. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review documentation of parental consent to evaluation for initial evaluations conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

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Finding 13:

The school did not consistently ensure that students found eligible for special education and related services under the categories of specific learning disability or other health impaired met the eligibility criteria. Specifically, the school did not document in either the initial IEP or in eligibility documentation, the criteria used to determine eligibility.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(a-c) and 3.6(a-c).

Required Action:

The school must ensure students found eligible for special education and related services meet the criteria for one or more of the disability categories as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(c) and 3.6(a-b) and that the criteria used to determine eligibility is maintained in the initial IEP or eligibility documentation. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review documentation of eligibility for students evaluated between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 14:

The school did not consistently conduct annual review meetings within required timelines for students eligible for special education and related services.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(a) and a(1)

Required Action:

The school must ensure that IEPs meetings are conducted annually or more often if necessary, to review and revise the IEP. In order to demonstrate correction of the noncompliance the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review documentation from annual review meetings conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 15:

The school did not consistently ensure that IEPs included the program type, duration, and frequency for students eligible for special education and related services.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(d)4, 8

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Required Action:

The school must ensure that when developing IEPs for students placed in class resource and pull out resource programs that the IEPs include the program, duration, frequency, and group size. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for specific students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs, a random sample of IEPs developed at meetings conducted between December 2020 and March 2021, and review the oversight procedures.

Finding 16:

The school did not consistently ensure that the IEPs of students with disabilities placed in in-class resource programs were implemented.

Citation:

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.1(a)

Required Action:

The school must ensure that all students with disabilities are provided the educational program required by the students' IEPs. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and school administrators and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance the school must conduct annual review meetings for specific students with IEPs that were not implemented, to determine the compensatory services to be provided and document the decision in the IEP. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct a site visit to interview staff, review the IEPs from the required annual review meetings, the schedule for the provision of compensatory services, and review the oversight procedures. The names of the students whose IEPs were not implemented will be provided to the school by the special education monitor.

Administrative

Finding 17:

The monitors noted that through January 30, 2020 the school had expended little of their Federal funding for FY 2019/2020. The following is a summary of the year to date expenditures.

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Award	Total Allocation	Expended To January 30, 2020	Percent Expended
Title I	\$473,953	\$7,180	2%
Title III	\$77,310	\$0	0%
IDEA Basic	\$100,286	\$0	0%
IDEA Preschool	\$2,122	\$0	0%

Failure to expend additional funds in accordance with the approved grant applications could result in the permanent loss of Federal funds.

Citation:

Uniform Grant Guidance 2 C.F.R. 200.302.

Recommended Action:

In order to avoid the potential loss of funds, where possible, the school should identify and charge appropriate expenditures to these grants by the end of their respective project period. The school must also implement internal controls to provide assurance that necessary internal controls are in place to prevent future lapsed funds in all program areas.

Finding 18:

The school failed to formally appoint all individuals charged to the federal programs by board resolution.

Citation:

Uniform Grant Guidance 2 C.F.R. 200.302.

Required Action:

All staff charged to federal grants should be reappointed annually by board resolution.

The NJDOE thanks you for your time and cooperation during the monitoring visit and looks forward to a successful resolution of all findings and implementation of all recommendations contained in this report.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hoffmann via phone at (609) 376-3593 or via email at steven.hoffmann@doe.nj.gov.