

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

**Charter school:** Granville Charter School

**County:** Mercer

**Monitoring Dates:** January 13-14, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Barbara J. Tucker, Dorothenia Boyd-Jackson, Michelle E. Davis and Donna Best

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Granville Charter School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Granville Charter 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 protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and,
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

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 Granville Charter School developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) 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.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Granville School on January 8, 2003. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE team reviewed charter school documents, including charter school policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the charter school's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

**Charter School Strengths:**

The charter school is commended for providing the following program which includes students with disabilities:

**The Yellow Rose Project** is a program designed to develop an interest in community involvement and service. As a member of an urban community, students participating in

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this program develop a strong bond with one another and learn to identify with the needs of the community in which they live.

### **Section I: General Provisions**

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

During the self-assessment process the charter school identified concerns in the areas of Policies & Procedures, staff/parent training and dissemination of IDEA information. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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

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

During the self-assessment process the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of certification.

During the self-assessment process the charter school identified concerns in the areas of the provision of counseling as a related service, provision of interim IEPs, and transfer students. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding extended school year, provision of programs, provision of related services including occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech/language therapy and speech/language goals and objectives.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

##### **Extended School Year For Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services –**

During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews and record review that extended school year is not considered for these students at IEP meetings.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that extended school year is considered for all students at IEP meetings. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Provision of Programs and Related Services** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through the public meeting, staff interviews and review of IEPs that students do not receive the special education programs and related services indicated in their IEPs due to insufficient staff and the charter school's practice of assigning staff to duties which interfere with the provision of programs and services.

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- The charter school will immediately provide the programs and services required by IEPs. The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that programs and services are provided in a timely manner from this point forward. The plan must also include a mechanism to determine the need for additional staff as well as a mechanism to demonstrate how the school will obtain those staff members in the event they are needed. Additionally, the charter school must identify the manner in which it will provide compensatory services to those students who did not receive the programs and services they were entitled to receive.

### ***Section III: Procedural Safeguards***

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

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consent, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process the charter school identified concerns in the areas of selection and training of surrogate parents, parental consent for reevaluations and release of records, notice of meeting content/provision, parental participation, content/provision of written notice and provision of special education regulations to parents. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### ***Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification***

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

During the self-assessment process the charter school identified concerns in the areas of child find, referral procedures, pre-referral interventions, identification meeting timelines, meeting participants, health appraisal and vision/hearing screenings. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding direct referrals from teachers.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Direct Referrals** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews that the charter school's referral process does not permit teachers to make direct referrals to the child study team. Additionally, it was reported by staff that parent

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referrals are sometimes delayed because school administrators require the team to conduct immediate evaluations with other students who are problematic in the school.

- **The charter school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure staff have the ability to directly refer a student to the child study team and to participate in a meeting when they believe the nature of the student's problem is such that an evaluation is warranted without delay. Additionally, the improvement plan must ensure that administrative requests for immediate evaluations do not delay or interfere with evaluation timelines of other students. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

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

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standardized assessments and bilingual assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of acceptance/rejection of reports, and multi-disciplinary evaluations. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports and signed/dated reports.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

##### **Written Reports for Students Eligible for Special Education and Related Services -**

During the on-site monitoring it was determined that written reports are not consistently dated. As a result it could not be determined when these reports were developed.

- **The charter school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written reports are dated. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Written Reports for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined that for students eligible for speech and language services, written reports do not contain the required components.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written reports for students determined eligible for speech and language services include the required components in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14- 3.4(d). The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative**

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oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.

**Section VI:   Reevaluation**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of planning meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of reevaluation timelines, nature and scope, and reevaluations conducted without undue delay. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding participants at planning meetings.

**Area(s) of Need:**

**Participants at Planning Meetings** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews and a review of records that regular education teachers and special education teachers do not consistently attend planning meetings.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that regular education and special education teachers consistently attend planning meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section VII:   Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of eligibility meetings, copy of evaluation reports to parent/adult student, documentation of eligibility statement for students with specific learning disability and eligibility criteria. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding signatures of agreement/disagreement.

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### Area(s) of Need:

**Signatures of Agreement/Disagreement** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the charter school does not document the agreement/disagreement with eligibility determinations by meeting participants.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that participants at eligibility meetings document their agreement/disagreement with eligibility determinations. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

#### Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of statements and considerations, Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs), goals and objectives and age of majority.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of implementation of student IEPs, meetings held within 30 days of eligibility meetings, meeting participants, 90-day timelines, copy of IEP to parent/adult student, implementation dates, IEP in effect prior to provision of services, teacher access and responsibility, IEPs in effect at the beginning of the school year, parents and students being provided with the opportunity to observe proposed educational placements and annual review timelines. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

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

#### Area(s) of Need:

**Participants at IEP Meetings** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews and record review that because meetings are held after school hours to accommodate the part-time child study team, regular and special education teachers are typically not available to participate in meetings. Additionally, the speech language therapist does not include the regular education teacher in meetings.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure all required members of the IEP team participate in meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

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### **Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

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

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of regular education access.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of the continuum of programs. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas 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.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding placement decisions, consideration of supplementary aids and services and notification to out-of-district students regarding nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Placement Decisions** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and staff interviews that when a student is evaluated as a result of disciplinary actions, the IEP team does not consider placement in the general education setting with appropriate supplemental aids and services. Instead, the decision always results in removal from the general education setting.

- **The charter school will convene an appropriately configured IEP team to conduct immediate reviews of IEPs for those students who were placed outside of the general education program subsequent to disciplinary actions to determine the appropriateness of the placements. The charter school will also revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure placement decisions are based on the individual needs of the students and that general education with appropriate supports and services is the first option considered for all students determined eligible for special education and related services. The plan must include a mechanism to document that decision-making process in the IEP. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Notification to Out-of-District Students** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and staff interview that the charter school does not inform students in out-of-district placements of extracurricular/nonacademic activities.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to ensure that students in out-of-district placements are informed of extracurricular/nonacademic activities and that documentation of the notification is maintained in student files. The plan must include procedures, in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

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**Section X: Transition to Post-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of Statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services and student/agency invitation. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section X: Transition to Preschool**

**The charter school does not have a Preschool Program.**

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of documentation to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral improvement plan, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternative educational setting, 45-day return and procedural safeguards. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of participation, approved accommodations/modifications, IEP documentation and alternate assessments. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.



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### ***Section XIII: Graduation***

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

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of IEP requirements at age 14, attendance, credit hours, HSPA, local requirements, out-of-district participation and written notice of graduation. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### ***Section XIV: Programs and Services***

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

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of group sizes for speech/language therapy.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of class size waivers, age range waivers, home instruction and consultation time for staff. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### ***Section XV: Student Records***

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

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of access/requests, access sheets, maintenance/destruction of records and documentation of other locations. **The charter school has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The improvement plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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### **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at the Granville Charter School on January 13 & 14, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the charter school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the charter school's improvement plan. The charter school is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the charter school was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that some revisions will bring about systemic change.

At a focus group meeting the five parents who attended indicated that staff members are always willing to dialogue with them regarding student needs and progress. However, these parents also expressed concern regarding the provision of speech/language services.

During the self-assessment process the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certification consent, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, standardized assessments, bilingual assessments, planning meetings, statements and considerations, present levels of educational performance, goals and objectives, age of majority, regular education access and group sizes for speech/language therapy.

During the self-assessment process the charter school identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, staff/parent training, dissemination of IDEA information, provision of counseling as a related service, provision of interim IEPs, transfer students, selection/training of surrogate parents, parental consent for reevaluations, release of records, notice of meeting content/provision, parental participation, content/provision of written notice, provision of special education regulations to parents, child find, referral procedures, pre-referral interventions, identification meeting timelines, meeting participants, health appraisals, vision/hearing screenings, acceptance/rejection of reports, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services and students eligible for speech/language services, reevaluation timelines, nature and scope, reevaluations conducted without undue delay, eligibility meeting, copy of evaluation reports to parent/adult student, documentation of eligibility statement for students with specific learning disability, eligibility criteria, implementation of student IEPs, meetings held within 30 days of eligibility meeting, meeting participants, 90-day timelines, copy of IEP to parent/adult student, implementation dates, IEP is in effect prior to provision of services, teacher access/responsibility, IEPs in effect at beginning of school year, parents and students provided opportunity to observe proposed educational placement, annual review timelines, continuum of programs, statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services, student/agency invitation, documentation to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral improvement plans, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternate educational setting, 45-day return, procedural safeguards, participation in statewide assessments, approved accommodations/modifications, IEP documentation of statewide assessments, alternate assessments, IEP requirements at age 14, attendance, credit hours, HSPA, local requirements, out-of-district participation, written notice of graduation, class size/waivers, age range/waivers, home instruction, consultation time for staff, access/requests, access sheets, maintenance/destruction of records and documentation of other locations.

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The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding extended school year for speech/language services, provision of programs, provision of related services including occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech/language therapy, speech/language goals and objectives, direct referrals from teachers, written reports for students eligible for special education and related services, components of reports for students eligible for speech/language services, participants at reevaluation planning meetings, signatures of agreement/disagreement, participants at IEP meetings, placement decisions, consideration of supplementary aids and services and notification of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Grandville Charter School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.