

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

Receiving School: Bergen Center for Child Development

County: Bergen

Monitoring Dates: October 12 – 13, 2004

Monitoring Team: Ann Marie Bruder, and Janet Wright

Background Information:

During the 2003–2004 school year, the Bergen Center for Child Development conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Bergen Center for Child Development 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 Bergen Center for Child Development 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 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, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Bergen Center for Child Development is commended for the NAPPI (Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention) training that has been provided to staff. NAPPI encompasses an approach to ensure positive behaviors for the student population. Staff is being trained to identify antecedents of behaviors and appropriate strategies to defuse any negative behaviors.

The Student Council group gives students the opportunity to learn about government by electing classroom representatives who participate in meetings with school staff to discuss school related issues.

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The students can participate in a sports tournament every six weeks which encourages physical activity and good sportsmanship. The Bergen Center for Child Development also has a basketball team which competes against other private schools. The school also hosts a holiday boutique for its students, family and friends where students can sell items they made. Students also have the opportunity to participate in local and state-wide art contests. Many have won awards and honors for their art work enrolled in these events.

The Bergen Center for Child Development also has a parent group to discuss issues important to parents of children with disabilities. During the parent group meeting, guest speakers come in and address topics of interest.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Bergen Center for Child Development 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 Bergen Center for Child Development 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 occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) speech and counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Bergen Center for Child Development identified concerns in the areas regarding school hearing aid procedures and provision of services. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Bergen Center for Child Development accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

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During the self-assessment process, the Bergen Center for Child Development identified concerns in the areas regarding current IEP and informing the teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities. The improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit a review of records, and interviews indicated that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in this area.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the areas of communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components relating to counseling goals and objectives and provision of reading assessments.

Areas of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components- During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a review of records indicated that, although the school provides counseling services, the school does not communicate to sending districts when annual goals and objectives for counseling were missing from IEPs.

- **The school will review its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that they communicate with sending districts when counseling goals and objectives are missing from IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the activities.**

Reading Assessments- During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a review of records indicated that the reading specialist conducts an end of the year, formal reading assessment for the students to document progress, to identify the beginning point for instruction to begin and to provide the teachers with strategies to assist the student with areas of weakness. Although this is a positive contribution, the school should receive parental consent to conduct the assessment since a formal report is written.

- **The school will review its improvement plan to include activities and procedures to ensure that the reading specialist is receiving the necessary parental consent for completing the reading assessment and writing the comprehensive report. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the activities.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Bergen Center for Child Development on October 12 – 13, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Bergen Center for Child Development 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 the review the receiving school was able to identify all but two areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will bring about the systemic change. The receiving school is further commended of the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statues and regulations.

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Bergen Center for Child Development during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas of compliance include 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 occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) speech and counseling services as per IEP, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Bergen Center for Child Development identified areas of need regarding having hearing aid procedures, provision of services, current IEPs and informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding consent for the formal reading assessment, and communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Bergen Center for Child Development 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.