

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

Receiving School: LARC School

County: Camden County

Monitoring Dates: October 12-13, 2005

Monitoring Team: Catherine Thomas, Barbara Ciancaglini, Barbara Groff, Elaine Lerner

Background Information:

During the 2004 – 2005 school year, the LARC School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the LARC 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 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 LARC School 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 LARC School is commended for the provision of community based instruction, through which students learn skill generalization, acquire social and interaction skills, experience performance standards expected by the community and respond to natural cues inherent in each setting.

The school should also be commended for its arts program which integrates music, visual and performing arts into the curriculum. The school participates in a music program with the Haddonfield Symphony in which the members of the symphony come to the school to familiarize students with their music. The students then attend a

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

performance conducted by the symphony. In addition, the school organizes multi-cultural performances that allow the students to both experience the performance and participate with the performers while learning about a variety of musical styles and instruments. The students also have the opportunity to participate in a student art festival and reception in which students' art pieces are displayed. Parents and community members attend the festival.

Financial assistance is available through grant opportunities to aid families in need of respite care. Staff members assist families by providing respite care in the home. This was initiated by the school after learning that many families were not able to arrange for respite care through other agencies.

To assist students in dealing with other individuals, the school has trained their staff to implement a social emotional program called Relationship Development Intervention (RDI). Through this program, students learn appropriate social skills and how to develop and maintain friendships.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE), Facility Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the LARC School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the LARC School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the LARC School identified concerns in the areas regarding staff development and parent training. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, through a review of records and staff interviews it was determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in these areas.

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

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the LARC School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification, supervision of paraprofessionals and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the LARC School identified concerns in the area regarding documentation of supervision for certified occupational therapy assistants

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

(COTA). The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, through a review of records and staff interviews, it was determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in this area.

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 LARC School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and implementation of IEP components and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the LARC School identified an area of concern regarding the provision of increased opportunities for students to interact with non-disabled peers. The school's improvement plan was sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, through a review of records and staff interviews, it was determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities to address this area of concern.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the LARC School on October 12-13, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the LARC School report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the receiving school was able to all identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that is sufficient to bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result all identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by LARC School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit included **Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE), Facility Requirements, Discipline, Program and Services and Student Records.**

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the LARC School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification, supervision of paraprofessionals, having an approved professional development plan, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and implementation of IEP components and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the LARC School identified an area of need regarding staff development, parent training, documentation of supervision for certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA) and an area of concern regarding the provision of increased opportunities for students to interact with non-disabled peers.

The LARC School is not required to submit revisions to their improvement plan since all areas of noncompliance have been identified and corrected by the school.