

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

Receiving School: Pineland Learning Center **County:** Cumberland

Monitoring Dates: January 27, 28, 29, 2003
Revised report dated 5/28/03

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Background Information

During the 2001 – 2002 school year, Pineland Learning Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided Pineland Learning Center 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. Pineland Learning Center 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 Pineland Learning Center's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

Pineland Learning Center is to be commended for the variety of academic, social and service opportunities that are offered to their students. The marine science program allows students to explore the Maurice River by boat and includes water safety training provided by the Coast Guard. Students in the agriculture program help the community by planting shrubs in the Deerfield and Vineland communities. Educational field days are incorporated in the agriculture curriculum during the fall and spring. An affiliation with University of Pennsylvania graduate students allows the Pineland students to participate in an archeological dig site. In science, the students learn about weather by using a homemade hurricane machine.

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Pineland Learning Center provides students the opportunity to serve the community. Service groups participate in projects with the Salvation Army, a homeless shelter kitchen and a local nursing home.

The Pineland Learning Center collaborates with sending districts and encourages students to participate in sports teams at the students' home district. In addition, a dental clinic is provided to allow students access to dental services.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

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

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment Pineland Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, and provision of programs in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, Pineland Learning Center identified concerns in the areas of staff development. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment Pineland Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of use of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit concerning the area of certified/licensed staff.

Area of Need:

Certified/Licensed Staff - During the on-site visit through staff interviews it was determined that the school provides speech and language services by contracting with an approved clinic.

- **No revision to the school's improvement plan is required at this time, since changes to this regulation have been proposed to the State Board of Education. Should the proposed amendment fail to be approved, a revision to the improvement plan will be required.**

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Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment Pineland Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of programs provided in approved facilities and certificates of occupancy and inspections.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding fire drills.

Area of Need:

Fire Drills - During the on-site visit through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that fire drills had not been consistently conducted twice monthly as required. Documentation of improvement was provided during the on-site visit which indicated that since December 2002, the school corrected this and two drills have now been held monthly.

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment Pineland Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, and progress reports.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding communication to sending district regarding missing components and implementation of IEP components.

Areas of Need:

Communication to Sending District Regarding Missing Components – During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, record review and sending district case manager interviews, it was determined that the school has no procedure in place to communicate with sending districts when IEP components such as goals and objectives related to core curriculum content standards, statewide testing requirements and limited English proficiency statements are missing.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that school districts are notified when any IEP components such as goals and objectives related to core curriculum content standards, statewide testing requirements and limited English proficiency statements are missing. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Implementation of IEP Components – During the on-site through staff interviews and classroom observation it was determined that IEP components were not implemented due to the fact many components were missing such as goals and objectives related to core curriculum content standards and statewide testing requirements.

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- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that all sections of the IEP are consistently implemented.**

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Summary

Pineland Learning Center is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. 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.

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in Pineland Learning Center on January 27, 28, 29, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify Pineland Learning Center's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review Pineland Learning Center's improvement plan.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by Pineland Learning Center during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, and providing programs in nonsectarian settings. length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP, provision of related services, physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities and certificates of occupancy and inspections, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, and progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, removal of students, changes to program/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student, class/size age ranges, exceptions, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEPs, core curriculum content standards including core curriculum content standards for students with severe disabilities, home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access to records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, Pineland Learning Center identified an area of need regarding staff development.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding certified/licensed staff, fire drills, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and location of records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, Pineland Learning Center will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs and to the county office of education to address those areas that require revisions.