

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

**Receiving School:** The Center School

**County:** Middlesex

**Monitoring Dates:** February 2 and 3, 2004

**Monitoring Team:** Denise Wilkens, Karen Frumen, Elaine Lerner

**Background Information:**

During the 2002– 2003 school year, the Center School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Center 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 Center 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, related service personnel and parents.

**School Strengths:**

The Center School is commended for the efforts made by staff to communicate with parents. Staff members indicate that they often call parents several times a week and follow up with weekly progress reports that are sent home. Staff also meets both formally and informally to discuss academic and treatment needs of students.

Some students enrolled in the Center School maintain their involvement with their resident district by also enrolling in a class in the district. The Center School provides support for those students who currently attend the school on a shared-time basis.

The Center School also provides support for students who wish to attend activities at their sending districts. Students are currently attending after school activities such as the art club and drama club.

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**Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline**, were determined to be areas of compliance by the Center School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

**Section I: General Provisions**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Center School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding, staff development, annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures relating to current IEPs. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 self-assessment, the Center School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, 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 and provision of services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified concerns in the areas regarding the related service of occupational therapy (OT). **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures to ensure that when the receiving school believes that an enrolled student may benefit from related services not assigned in the IEP, a referral is made to the child study team of the sending district, Regulations require that the IEP team determines whether or not an evaluation is warranted and if the related service should be added to the IEP. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures. The plan must be revised to include these components.**

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 Center School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age fourteen and older, signatures of participants present on IEPs, communication to sending districts

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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 for support and assistance and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified concerns in the areas regarding implementation of IEP components relating to goals and objectives aligned to core curriculum content standards and documentation of student progress. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit a review of records indicate that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit in the area regarding current IEP prior to service delivery.

### **Areas of Need:**

**Current IEP Prior to Service Delivery-** During the on-site visit, through record review and interviews, it was determined that the school does not have procedures in place to ensure that the receiving school communicates with the sending districts when a current IEP is not received in a timely manner.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates with the sending districts when IEPs are not received in a timely manner. The plan must include administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section VII: Programs and Services**

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

During self-assessment, the Center School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained in CCCSs, teachers instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified concerns in the area regarding dispensing of medication. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks a mechanism to ensure that medication is dispensed by certified medical professionals in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16. The school must revise their plan to include procedures to ensure that only those medical professionals dispense medication when the school certified nurse is not available, such as during field trips. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures. The plan must be revised to include these components.**

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

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**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Center School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding 5 days of tardiness /absences, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified concerns in the areas regarding, location of other records specified in central file. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit a review of records indicate 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.

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Center School on February 2 and 3, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Center School's 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 that review, the receiving school was able to identify all but one area 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.

### **Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Center School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included: staff development, annual reports, amendments, services provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, 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 and provision of services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history, professional development, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, communication to sending districts regarding missing components, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time-out rooms, restraints, and aversives, removal of student, changes to program/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student, class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEP, CCCSs, home instruction, medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access to records, access sheets, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Center School identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures relating to current IEPs, provision of related services, implementation of IEP components relating to goals and objectives aligned to core curriculum content standards and documentation of student progress, dispensing of medication/nursing services, and location of records.

The on-site visit identified one additional area of need within the various standards regarding current IEP prior to service delivery.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Center School 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.