

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

Receiving School: Devereux Center for Autism, NJ

County: Cumberland

Monitoring Dates: October 7-9, 2002

Monitoring Team: Barbara Ciancaglini, Catherine Thomas, Mary Heade

Background Information:

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

School Strengths:

Devereux is commended for providing their students with the opportunity for community involvement. The job coach facilitates activities with placements in The Spanish Community Center, Qwik Lube, Salvation Army and the Fairfield Municipal Building among many others. Devereux continues to develop relationships with businesses and community groups for their students. Through the use of such programs many of the students are enhancing their capabilities as they learn janitorial skills, packaging, sorting and folding. In addition, students are experiencing social relationships with non-disabled persons.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Devereux provides an extensive, well scripted and implemented program of Functional Behavioral Analysis, with certified staff providing services.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, and Discipline were determined to be areas of compliance by Devereux 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, Devereux accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, and observation of programs.

During the self-assessment process, Devereux identified concerns in the areas of extended school year approval, provision of services as per IEP and provision of speech services. The receiving school's improvement plan for the area of extended school year approval was sufficient to address this area of need. Documentation of extended school year approval was corrected by the receiving school and verified during the on-site visit. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of provision of services as per IEP and provision of speech services because they lack procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to 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, Devereux accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meeting held annually, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/staff of IEP responsibilities, observation of proposed placements, and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, Devereux identified concerns in the areas of IEP meetings held with appropriate participants, no delay in IEP implementation, and implementation of IEP components. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because they lack procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit concerning communication with sending districts on missing IEP components, and administration of statewide testing.

Areas of Need:

Communication with Sending District Regarding Missing IEP Components– During the on-site visit through record reviews, sending district case manager interviews, and staff interviews it was determined that the school has no procedure in place to communicate with sending districts when IEP components such as transition information and services and least restrictive environments (LRE) statements are missing.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that school districts are notified when IEP components such as transition and LRE statements are missing. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Statewide Testing – During the on-site visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record reviews that staff members are administering the alternate proficiency assessment (APA) to students who meet age requirements without support of the IEP which did not include this component.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that, when statewide assessment is not addressed in IEPs, sending districts are notified so that IEP meetings can be convened to determine how each student will participate in statewide assessment. In addition, the school will revise its improvement plan to ensure that students participate in statewide testing as indicated in the IEP. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment Devereux accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size and age range, description of special class programs, certification, special classes implementing IEP, school functions and services, and interscholastic sports.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding exceptions, core curriculum content standards (CCCSs) and core curriculum content standards for students with severe disabilities (CCSSSD) and the administration of medication.

Areas of Need:

Exceptions – During the on-site visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that the receiving school does not have a process in place to ensure

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

collaboration with the sending districts with regard to exceptions for class size and age range.

- **The school will revise their improvement plan to include procedures to ensure collaboration with sending districts when exceptions are needed. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

CCCSs/CCCSSD – During the on-site visit, it was determined through staff interviews, record review and classroom observation that the teachers do not demonstrate that they have been trained in the core curriculum content standards including those for students with severe disabilities.

- **The school will develop an improvement plan that includes in-service and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent and compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Administering Medication – During the on-site visit, it was determined through staff interview and document review, that medication is administered by unauthorized individuals.

- **The school will develop an improvement plan to include procedures, in-service for nursing staff, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Devereux accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of conformance to pupil record code, access to records, access sheets, location of records, and daily attendance.

During the self-assessment process, Devereux identified concerns in the areas of return of records, tardiness and absences, written notification of attendance and mandated health records. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because they lack procedures to ensure that the school communicates with the sending districts and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.**

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 at the Devereux Center for Autism on October 7, 8, 9, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify Devereux's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review Devereux's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify 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. Areas identified as consistently compliant by Devereux during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, staff development, annual reports and amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, and observation of programs, certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment /job descriptions of paraprofessionals, criminal history, having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted annually, signature present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/staff of IEP responsibilities, observation of proposed placements, 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 and termination of student, class size and age range, description of special class programs, certification, special classes implementing IEP, school functions and services, and interscholastic sports, conformance to pupil record code, access to records, access sheets, location of records, and daily attendance .

During the self-assessment process, Devereux identified areas of need regarding extended school year approval, provision of services as per IEP and provision of speech services, IEP held with appropriate participants, no delay in IEP implementation, implementation of IEP components, provision of services as per IEP and related services of speech, return of records, tardiness and absences, written notification of attendance and mandated health records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding exceptions, CCCSs/CCCSSSD, administering medication, communication with sending districts regarding missing IEP components and statewide testing.

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