

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

Receiving School: Alpha School

County: Ocean

Monitoring Dates: February 14-15, 2005

Monitoring Team: Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen, Barbara Groff

Background Information:

During the 2003–2004 school year, the Alpha School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Alpha 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 Alpha 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 Alpha School is commended for their job awareness programs in which students participate in career exploration activities. The programs include the Career Education Program, the Community Opportunities for Rewarding Employment (CORE) and the Student's Experience Employment Development (SEED) which offer students varying degrees of job awareness and opportunities. Some opportunities include volunteer work, employment at job sites and classroom business activities.

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Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Facility Requirements and Programs and Services were determined to be areas of compliance by the Alpha School 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 Alpha School 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, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) services as per IEP, speech-language services and counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids and program open to observation by LEA and DOE. The receiving 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 receiving 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 III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Alpha School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified concerns in the area regarding criminal history verification. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the employment of a full-time certified school nurse.

Area of Need:

Certified School Nurse – During the on-site visit, staff interviews confirmed that the school's current nurses do not hold New Jersey Department of Education certification.

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- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the required full range of nursing services is provided by employing a full time certified school nurse.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Alpha 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, 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 informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and implementation of IEP components relating to provision of specific strategies or positive behavioral interventions to students who require them as per their IEP. The receiving 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 receiving 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 VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment, the Alpha School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, and procedures for termination of student.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified concerns in the areas regarding notification to sending districts regarding suspensions. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving 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 VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Alpha 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, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written

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communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness /absences, and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified areas of need regarding written notice of attendance. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving 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.

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Summary

The Alpha School is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of the 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 Alpha School is further commended for the many areas determined by the Alpha 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 the Alpha School on February 14 and 15, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Alpha School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Facility Requirements and Programs and Services were determined to be areas of compliance by the Alpha School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Alpha School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included 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, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech-language and counseling services as per IEP, private school dual employment, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, having an approved professional development plan, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, 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, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student placement, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness /absences, and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Alpha School identified areas of need regarding hearing aids, observation of programs, criminal history, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, communication to sending districts regarding missing components, implementation of IEP components, suspensions and written notice of attendance.

The on-site visit identified one additional area of need within the various standards regarding employment of a certified full-time school nurse.

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Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Alpha School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the one area that requires revisions.