

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: Newmark School (Plainfield Elementary/Middle Campus and Carteret High School Campus)

Counties: Middlesex and Union

Monitoring Dates: December 15-16, 2004

Monitoring Team: Denise Wilkens, Paul Bilik, Heather Mills-Pevonis

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Newmark School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Newmark 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 Newmark 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 Newmark School is commended for the exemplary level of communication between school staff and parents. Weekly phone calls are made to each home to provide parents feedback on their child's academic and behavioral progress. Parents may also arrange to meet with the school's counselors in the evening to further reinforce student's program goals.

The Newmark School provides a school-wide behavior modification program coupled with the Social Decision Making and Problem Solving Curriculum. Students earn points throughout the day which provides them timely feedback and consequences for their

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behavior or rewards them with additional privileges such as free time and shopping at the school store.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

FAPE, Staff Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Newmark School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Newmark 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 Newmark School identified concerns in the area regarding staff development. 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 this area.

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

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Newmark School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities and fire drills.

During the self-assessment process, the Newmark School identified concerns in the area regarding current certificates of inspection. The Newmark School's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, the required certificate of inspection was provided to verify compliance in this area.

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Newmark 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 and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams

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During the self-assessment process, the Newmark School identified concern in the area regarding nursing services. The Newmark 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 this area.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Newmark School on December 15 and 16, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Newmark School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

Newmark 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 identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that was sufficient to bring about systemic change. Newmark 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 of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the Newmark School is commended for the many areas of need that were determined by the school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

FAPE, Staff Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Newmark School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Newmark School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, programs provided in approved facilities, fire drills, 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 and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Newmark School identified areas of need regarding staff development, current inspection certificate and nursing services.

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