

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

Receiving School: Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center **County:** Passaic

Monitoring Dates: December 20, 2005

Monitoring Team: Zola Mills, Gladys Miller and Tammy Miller

Background Information:

During the 2004– 2005 school year, Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided Mount Saint Joseph Children's 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. The Mount Saint Joseph Children's 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 Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center's 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 Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center special education administrators, building principal, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

Noncompliant items reflected in this report may result in nonallowable costs imposed by the Division of Finance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.1 through 4.16.

School Strengths:

The Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center is commended for its hands on Science program funded by a private grant through the Gallagher Fund and the multimedia/multicultural library materials from the same source. This equipment and materials have enabled the students to greatly improve their science scores on the statewide testing.

The Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center provides many community experiences of both recreational and academic nature to their students. These activities provide

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students enrichment and encouragement in their academic pursuits. As this is a residential program much of this activity occurs after the normal school day.

The Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center also provides the "Newspapers in Education Program" where real life lessons are constructed from newspapers and other curricular materials provided in the classroom.

The school is also commended for the extensive behavior management system in place and the high concentration of counseling staff available to the students. A psychiatrist is available one day a week and there are three full time social workers on staff.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Free, Appropriate Public Education, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center 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 Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center 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 III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding certified/licensed staff, appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office and criminal history verification.

During the self-assessment process, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center identified concerns in the area regarding having an approved professional development plan. 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.

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Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities and fire drills.

During the self-assessment process, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center identified concerns in the areas regarding certificates of occupancy and inspections. 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 V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students when required, 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 and implementation of IEP components.

During the self-assessment process, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center identified concerns in the areas regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components including but not limited to missing graduation requirements. **During the on-site visit, through interviews and record review, it was determined that although the school has developed procedures it lacks detail and specificity to correct the area of concern. The receiving school must revise its improvement plan to include additional procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding progress reports.

Area of Need:

Progress Reports – During the on-site visit, through staff interviews it was determined that although report cards are being sent quarterly, progress reports, documenting the student's accomplishment of the goals and objectives contained in the IEP are not being sent to parents or guardians.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that each student's progress toward their IEP goals and objectives is recorded and sent to the parents or guardians on a regular basis. The**

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improvement plan must include additional procedures, in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center 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, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction and policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding dispensing medication and nursing services.

Areas of Need:

Dispensing Medication and Nursing Services – During the on-site visit, through staff interviews it was determined that the school does not employ a full time certified school nurse as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16. In addition, through staff interviews it was determined that the registered nurse conducts staff trainings and completes nursing plans for students which is the responsibility of a certified school nurse as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16. Both nurses also package student medication to be administered by staff members who lack required licensure in the event the nurses are off campus during the school day.

- **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 to conduct those activities in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1. The school may request a waiver of full time status through the Regulatory Equivalency and Waiver process in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1. In addition, the school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students are administered medication only by authorized individuals in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b) 1.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center on December 20, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center'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 comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify most 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. The receiving school is commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, most of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit.

Free, Appropriate Public Education, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, certified/licensed staff, appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants and certified occupational therapy assistants, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, programs provided in approved facilities, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students when required, 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 administration, statewide testing support and assistance, implementation of IEP, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services.

During the self-assessment process, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center identified areas of need regarding having an approved professional development plan, staff development, certificates of occupancy and inspections and communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components including, but not limited to, missing graduation requirements.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding provision of progress reports, dispensing medication and nursing services.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Mount Saint Joseph Children's Center 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.