

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

Receiving School: Newgrange School

County: Mercer

Monitoring Dates: November 18-19, 2002

Monitoring Team: Carmen Fanucci, Deborah (Knauss) Magee, Judyth Vazquez

Background Information:

During the 2001 – 2002 school year, the Newgrange School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Newgrange 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 Newgrange 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 and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Newgrange School is commended for exceptional programs that focus on remedial reading and language enrichment. The remedial reading instructional program is composed of homogeneous groups with a maximum student teacher ratio of 4:1. Differentiated instruction and use of a variety of multi-sensory materials encourage optimal growth in student achievement. The language

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

enrichment program fosters development in oral communication skills, listening comprehension, and written expressive language skills.

The Newgrange School's commitment to professional development is apparent and should be commended. The teachers average seventy hours of professional development yearly. In addition to professional development activities provided by its affiliate, The Newgrange Educational Outreach Center, the school also utilizes training opportunities available through a variety of state and private sources.

The Newgrange School is commended for the efforts they have made with regard to communication to parents on student progress. Through staff interviews, it was determined that staff members communicate student progress to parents on a daily basis via e-mail and telephone calls.

The school is also commended for the consistency it has achieved in maintaining its staff for a significant number of years, which provides considerable instructional and therapeutic continuity for students.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

General Provisions, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Programs and Services were determined to be areas of compliance by the Newgrange 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 Newgrange School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and school year, physical education, services at no cost to parents, observation of programs and related services.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified concerns in the areas of hearing aids and provision of services. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding provision of services as per IEP.

Areas of Need:

Evaluation without referral- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that the speech therapist conducts evaluations for students in attendance at the school without making a referral to the child study team of the sending district. When the receiving school believes that an enrolled student may benefit from related service not assigned in the IEP, regulations require a

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

referral to the child study team of the sending district. The IEP team determines whether or not an evaluation is warranted and if the related service should be added to the IEP.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to ensure that when the school believes that an enrolled student may benefit from a related service not assigned in the IEP, a referral must be made to the child study team of the sending district. The improvement plan must include in-service and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Newgrange School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, use of PTA/COTA, private school dual employment, employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals and professional development.

During the self-assessment process, the Newgrange School identified a concern in the area of criminal history verification. The receiving 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 V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Newgrange School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEPs conducted at least annually, IEPs held with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, communication to sending districts regarding IEP components, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/staff of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and progress reports.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding implementation of IEP components.

Area of Need:

Implementation of IEP components- During the on-site visit, through record review and staff interviews, it was determined that the school implements IEP goals and objectives developed by the school, prior to consensus, by an appropriately configured IEP team during the IEP meeting.

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

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that goals and objectives are developed by an appropriately configured IEP team during the IEP meeting. The plan must include in-service, 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 the Newgrange School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of return of records, access sheets, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice to the Department of Education and health records.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding access to pupil records and the location of records.

Areas of Need:

Access to Pupil Records- During the on-site visit, through interviews, it was determined that non-certified staff has direct access to pupil records.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include in-service training to ensure implementation of policies and procedures limiting access to pupil records by non-certified staff.**

Location of Records- During the on-site visit, through interviews and record reviews, it was determined that the school did not provide notations in the central file as to where other records are maintained.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include in-service training to ensure implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that records for individual students shall be maintained in a central file with notations in the central file as to where other records are maintained.**

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

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at the Newgrange School on November 18 and 19, 2002. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the school's improvement plan. The school is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review, the school was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The school is further commended for the many areas that were determined by the school and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

During parent interviews, many parents commented positively on both the school's program and the commitment to the students by the school's staff members. Observations during the on-site visit confirmed the comments expressed by the parents.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, staff development, annual reports, amendments, the provision of programs and services in nonsectarian settings, length of day/year, physical education, services provided at no cost to the parents, observation of programs, related services, certified/licensed staff, dual employment, job descriptions, approved professional development plan, approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, staff attendance at IEP meetings, current IEPs, communication with sending districts, accessibility of IEPs, staff knowledge of accommodations and modifications, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student, changes to program/placement, suspensions, tracking of suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, terminations, instructional class sizes, exceptions, description of special class programs, certification, special classes implementing IEP, CCCS/CCCSSSD, home instruction, administering medication, nursing and medical services, pupil record code, return of records, access sheets, daily attendance, notification to sending districts of excessive absences, and mandated health records.

During the self-assessment process, the school identified areas of need regarding hearing aids, provision of services as per IEP and criminal history verification.

The on-site visit identified four additional areas of need within the various standards regarding provision of services as per IEP, access to records and location of records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the school will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.