

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

**Receiving School:** Sister Georgine School

**County:** Mercer

**Monitoring Dates:** December 12-14, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen, Barbara Groff, Deborah Magee, and Dolores Walther

**Background Information:**

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Sister Georgine School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Sister Georgine 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 Sister Georgine 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.

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 school is commended for their relationship with St. Francis Medical Center and Staples where students volunteer to develop job skills necessary for future employment. The students also work one day a week at the Mercer Skills Workshop which is a science center in Trenton that repairs equipment

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This year, Sister Georgine School held a “Come to School Day”, where parents were asked to participate in the daily school activities with their children. This activity helped parents to have a better understanding of how their children spend the school day.

### **Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**Staff Requirements** and **Facility Requirements** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Sister Georgine School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section I: General Provisions**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Sister Georgine School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures and staff development. 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 onsite visit.

### **Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Sister Georgine School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding services at no cost to parents, program open to observation by local education agency (LEA) and NJDOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) and speech language therapy as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education and maintenance of hearing aids. 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 onsite visit.

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**Section V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Sister Georgine School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP accessible to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, statewide testing, current IEP prior to service delivery and communication to sending district regarding missing components. The school's improvement plan was sufficient to address the areas of IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities and statewide testing. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in these areas. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas regarding current IEP prior to service delivery and communication to sending district regarding missing components because it lacks procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that the school obtains current and complete IEPs prior to service delivery. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.**

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

**Section VI: Discipline**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment, the Sister Georgine School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process and notification to sending districts regarding suspensions.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement. The 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 for correction in this area.

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

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**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams and provision of nursing services. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas regarding class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in these areas. **The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area regarding provision of nursing services because current procedures have not resulted in the employment of a certified school nurse. The school must continue their efforts to employ a certified school nurse to conduct activities specified in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(e).**

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

**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Sister Georgine School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified concerns in the areas regarding written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, through a review of records and staff interviews it was determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in these areas.

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

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Sister Georgine School on December 12, 13, and 14, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Sister Georgine School'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 this review the receiving school was able to identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that, with some revision, is sufficient to bring about systemic change. The receiving 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 most identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, 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 Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**Staff Requirements** and **Facility Requirements** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Sister Georgine School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Sister Georgine School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, services at no cost to parents, program open to observation by LEA and NJDOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech language therapy as per IEP, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP accessible to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Sister Georgine School identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, staff development, length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, statewide testing, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, medical exams and written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences.

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