

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

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| Receiving School: | Forum School |
| County: | Bergen |
| Monitoring Dates: | November 28, 2005 Revised report dated 7/07 |
| Monitoring Team: | Ann Marie Bruder, Mark Lanzi, Gregory Margolis, Zola Mills, Tammy Miller and Gladys Miller |

Background Information:

During the 2004– 2005 school year, the Forum School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Forum 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 Forum 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 individualized education programs (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 Forum School assists students who are transitioning into inclusive placements in their sending districts and as students prepare to attend high school programs upon graduating from the Forum School program. The Forum School's teachers and/or classroom aides provide assistance to the staff in the district program to ensure a smooth transition.

The school offers weekend recreational and educational activities for students and their families. Parents interviewed discussed a variety of training sessions and support that are available through the school. The school assists parents in dealing with behaviors that may occur within the home, sibling concerns, transition issues and life after Forum. The school administration also invites speakers, including lawyers,

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medical professionals, and other agency representatives, to parent meetings to discuss a variety of informative topics such as estate and trust planning.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Forum 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 Forum 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, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) speech language therapy and counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Forum School identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids. 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 school has implemented a school policy to maintain hearing aids for their students bringing this area into compliance.

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 Forum School on November 28, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Forum School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The Forum School is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify all but one area of need and develop an improvement plan that 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.

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, IEP/Annual Review, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Forum School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas determined to be consistently compliant by the Forum 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, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech language therapy and counseling services as per IEP, 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, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Forum School identified one area of need regarding maintenance of hearing aids.

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