

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

**Receiving School:** Eden Institute

**County:** Mercer

**Monitoring Dates:** December 1-3, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen, Elaine Lerner

**Background Information:**

During the 2002–2003 school year, the Eden Institute conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Eden Institute 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 Eden Institute 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:**

Eden Institute is commended for the After School Program that extends the day school curriculum and provides constructive educational and recreational activities for Eden students. Arts and crafts, music, sports and community outings are all part of the activity roster.

Eden Institute also implements and publishes a multivolume curriculum series for students ages three through twenty-one including academics, self-care, domestic, and vocational programs.

The school should also be commended for its parent and family support program designed to educate and assist families through its parent trainings, home visits and support groups. For home support, trained Eden staff members are assigned to families as consultants who

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meet monthly or as needed in the home to establish effective routines and work on specific goals.

Eden Institute offers a full array of training opportunities through their lecture and workshop series. These provide information for parents and professionals who are interested in learning more about autism. The workshop series are given by Eden faculty members and offer training sessions to parents and professionals on topics such as designing, implementing and assessing remedial programs for individuals with autism. In addition, their annual lecture features speakers that are known on a national and international level. The presenters include scientists, researchers, educators, and administrators who speak on topics related to autism research and service delivery.

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

**General Provisions** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Eden Institute 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 Eden Institute 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 and provision of speech language services as per IEP.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding policies and procedures for maintenance of hearing aids and documentation of speech services.

#### **Area of Need:**

**Maintenance of Hearing Aids-** During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school does not have policies and procedures for the maintenance of hearing aids.

- **The receiving school will develop a policy and procedure to ensure that hearing aids functioning properly and will provide staff training when students who use hearing aids are enrolled in the school.**

**Documentation of Speech Services-** During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and a review of records it was determined that while the speech practitioners are providing services, they do not maintain sufficient documentation of delivery of speech services in related service logs.

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that related service providers maintain documentation of all related services provided to students. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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**Section III: Staff Requirements**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding certified/licensed staff relating to unrecognized job titles.

**Area of Need:**

**Certified/licensed Staff-** During the on-site visit through record reviews and staff interviews it was determined that the school did not obtain county office approval for those staff members who have unrecognized job titles including behavior specialist, speech assistant and physical education assistant.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all unrecognized job titles are annually filed in the county office of education for review and approval. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Section IV: Facility Requirements**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections and fire drills.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the nurses' station, time-out rooms and therapy rooms off of the main classroom.

**Areas of Need:**

**Nurses' Station-** During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a tour of the school building confirmed that the nurses' station is inadequate to provide the required private rest area and bathroom facilities.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to identify an appropriate location for the provision of nursing services and obtain final facility approval from the county office of education.**

**Speech Therapy Room-** During the on-site visit, a tour of the school indicated that one speech therapy room did not have a vision panel.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to install a visual panel that allows visual access to the speech therapy room. In addition,**

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**the school will revise its improvement plan to ensure that any recommendations from the county office are implemented in a timely manner.**

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding receipt of a current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, signatures of participants present on IEPs, accessibility of IEP to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing relating to administration and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site in the areas of communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and implementation of IEP components relating to frequency duration and location of speech services.

**Areas of Need**

**Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components-** During the on-site visit through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school does not communicate with sending districts when IEP components are missing. Areas consistently missing include LRE statements, attendance requirements, frequency, duration and location of related services, statewide assessment, graduation requirements, and goals and objectives. It was also determined that the school uses Eden Institute IEP worksheets developed by the school in place of incomplete district IEPs. The program provided at Eden was not developed through an appropriately configured IEP team.

- **The receiving school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components such as LRE statements, attendance requirements, frequency, duration and location of related services, statewide assessment and graduation requirements are missing in order to develop a complete IEP. The IEP must be developed by an appropriately configured IEP team and must include all mandated components. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Implementation of IEP Components Relating to Frequency Duration and Location of Speech Services-** During the on-site visit through record reviews and interviews it was determined that speech services are provided to students according to existing program schedules and not determined on an individual basis at IEP meetings. In some cases, speech services are altered to fit existing school models. These changes were made unilaterally, without collaboration from the sending district, and without changing the IEP at a meeting with the IEP team.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the receiving school does not make unilateral decisions regarding the provision of related services. Only the IEP team can alter the student's program. If the school staff believes that a change in the program is appropriate they must contact the district of residence to request an IEP**

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meeting. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.

**Section VI: Discipline**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment, the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, use of restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the areas of behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) and use of time out rooms.

**Areas of Need:**

**Behavioral Intervention Plans-** During the on-site visit record reviews could not verify that BIPs were developed and approved at IEP meetings conducted with an appropriately configured IEP team. In addition, various components of the IEP were not presented as a complete document in student files.

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that BIPs are developed by an appropriately configured IEP team during the IEP meeting. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Time Out Rooms-** During the on-site visit though staff interviews and record reviews it was determined that the school does not maintain logs to document the time that students are placed in time out rooms.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that documentation of the use of time out rooms are maintained by the school. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding 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 in CCCSs, teachers 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 Eden Institute identified concerns in the areas regarding exceptions for class size and age range. The plan was sufficient to address this

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area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of documentation determined that the 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 VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the Eden Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding return of records upon termination, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absence, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding access to records.

**Area of Need:**

**Access of Records** - During the on-site visit through staff interviews, it was determined that classroom aides have access to student records.

- The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that access to student records is limited to those certified staff with educational responsibility for that student.

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Eden Institute on December 1-3, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Eden Institute report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The Eden Institute is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the receiving school developed 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.

**General Provisions** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Eden Institute during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Eden Institute 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 and provision of speech language services as per IEP, private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, receipt of a current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing relating to administration, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, standard disciplinary procedures, use of restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student, 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 in CCCSs, teachers instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, medical exams for sport teams, return of records upon termination, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Eden Institute identified areas of need regarding exceptions for class size and age range.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding policies and procedures for maintenance of hearing aids and documentation of speech services, certified/licensed staff relating to unrecognized job titles, facility issues related to nurses' station, time-out rooms and therapy rooms off of the main classroom, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, implementation of IEP components relating to frequency, duration and location of speech services, behavioral

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intervention plans (BIPs) and use of time out rooms, and conformance to pupil record code relating to access.

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