

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

Receiving School: Garfield Park Academy **County:** Burlington

Monitoring Dates: January 6, 7, 8, 2003

Monitoring Team: Deborah Magee, Mary Heade, Catherine Thomas, Barbara Ciancaglini, Judyth Vazquez

Background Information:

During the 2001– 2002 school year, Garfield Park Academy conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided Garfield Park Academy 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. Garfield Park Academy 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:

Garfield Park Academy is commended for its Parent Education Program which is run by their social workers. They provide transportation, child care, and food for the parents and children.

Garfield Park Academy is also commended for its Paraprofessional Training Program for their staff. This program provides academic skill training with competency based assessment in order to place aides in classrooms according to their strengths.

Garfield Park Academy has certified vocational programs in culinary arts, cosmetology, woodshop, automotive, and retail trades. In addition to instructing in the vocational content

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

area, they focus on cross content work place readiness skills such as etiquette, personal/professional appearance, and social skills.

The therapeutic, academic and behavioral components of Garfield Park Academy's program are integrated. In addition, Garfield Park Academy provides a scholarship program for students going on to college. Tuition, books, and one year of counseling are paid for by a benefactor.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Facility Requirements, Programs/Services, and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by Garfield Park Academy and by the Department of Education during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Garfield Park Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures, annual reports, and amendments.

During the self-assessment process, Garfield Park Academy identified concerns in the area of 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 found during the on-site visit.

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Garfield Park Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year, observation of programs, provision of services as per IEP and the related services of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech.

During the self-assessment process, Garfield Park Academy identified concerns in the area of provision of counseling services. 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.

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

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Garfield Park Academy 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 criminal history verification.

During the self-assessment process, Garfield Park Academy identified a concern in the area of professional development. The 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 around about correction in this area.

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, Garfield Park Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meetings conducted at least annually, current IEP, IEP accessibility, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, and progress reports.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding implementation of IEP components, student participation at IEP meetings and communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components.

Areas of Need:

Implementation of IEP Components - During the on-site visit, through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school routinely convenes an IEP meeting 30 days after the student enrolls at the school. At this meeting, the receiving school modifies the existing IEP including, goals and objectives, subject areas taught and related services. The school sends a letter to the sending district to request approval for modifications to the IEP without the participation of the IEP team.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures and staff training to ensure that IEPs are implemented as written and that modifications to the IEP are made through an appropriately configured IEP team. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

IEP Conducted with Appropriate Participants - During the on-site visit it was determined through staff interviews and record reviews that students do not attend IEP meetings. It was explained that an administrative decision was made to exclude student participation at IEP meetings because the administration believed that students' behavior would be disruptive.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that decisions are being made on an individualized basis for students' participation at IEP meetings. The plan must also include procedures to ensure**

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

that the receiving school assists students in their successful participation in their IEP meeting and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing IEP Components- During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews it was determined that the school does not communicate with sending districts when IEP components, such as present level of educational performance and statements concerning least restrictive environments are missing.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates with the sending district when components, such as present level of educational performance and statements concerning least restrictive environments, are missing. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI. Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Garfield Park Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, restraints, and aversives, removal of students, changes to program/placement, interim alternative settings and termination of student.

During the self-assessment process, Garfield Park Academy identified concerns in the area of suspensions. The receiving school added an in-school suspension component to their program to reduce the number of suspensions. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures to ensure that the in-school suspension room is instructed by certified staff.** The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. During the on-site visit, through staff interviews it was determined that the school has the in-school suspension room now supervised and instructed by a certified teacher of the handicapped.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Garfield Park Academy on January 6, 7 and 8, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify Garfield Park Academy'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 but three areas of need and develop an improvement plan that, with some revisions, will be 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, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the receiving school is commended for the many areas that were determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by Garfield Park Academy during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, standard disciplinary procedures, procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student, changes to programs/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student, class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEP, CCCSs/CCCSSSD, home instruction, dispensing medication/nursing services, medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, Garfield Park Academy identified areas of need regarding staff development, counseling, professional development, and suspensions.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding implementation of IEP components, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, and communication to sending district regarding missing components.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, Garfield Park Academy 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 of need that require revisions.